

The Sword and Exquisiteness

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Volume 1 - The Chancellor of the Wulin

Chapter 1 : A Sudden Calamity

Yu Peiyu knelt down and sobbed:"Uncle Wang, you're just too late. My father..."
Wang YuLuo sighed:"I know what happened to you and your father. Why did such a thing happen?"
Yu Peiyu sadly wanted to relate what happened:"I..."
Suddenly he raised his head and asked:"How did you know what happened?"

In a dark shady courtyard, there is an old man in a green robe standing under an old tree. His hair, eyebrows and beard are coloured greenish by the light. He looks very tranquil and carefree, his hands are folded behind his back as he watches the young man, who sits in front of him, writing.

The young man is kneeling in front of a small table, in his hand he is holding a brush. It is as thick as the arm of a baby in diameter and it is about 7 metres long.

The young man is writing the final characters on his essay.

The young man puts down his brush and raises his head and says:"All the heroes in the realm wouldn't miss out on The Gathering at Lake Huang. Aren't you going, father?"

The old man smiles and says:"You ask me this question after copying the scriptures of Nanhua (a Taoist codex written by the Taoist philosopher Chuang Tzu 369-286 B.C.)it seems that your cultivation has improved. However should you be asking this question altogether? After all this time haven't you been able to pass beyond the word "hero?"

The young man looks up and ponders for awhile and replies:"Yes, you're right."

A gentle breeze was blowing, the leaves rustled, suddenly a black figure came down from the tree tops. In an instant he ascended and came down without any noise.

The man is rather short and skinny man in a black robe. The robe is very tight revealing his trained muscles and every part of his body is maintaining a sharp vigilance.

The old and young man are not startled and just look at him casually, it seems like to them that this man was standing there the entire time.

The man laughed and said:"The Old Man of Mount Yue, Yu Fanghe has indeed great self- control. It's even more surprising that young master Yu has the same self-control. I, Hei Gezi (Black Pigeon) am deeply impressed."

Yu Fanghe smiled:"Oh, you're Master Hei one of the 7 Heroes whose art of levitation is famous throughout the realm."

Hei Gezi replied:"Old master should know that I am the weakest and most useless one of the "Seven Birds of Wulin". I'm unworthy of becoming a robber or even an armed guard. I just rely on my fast legs and my tight mouth to deliver messages."

Yu Fanghe happily said:" Brother Hei does not take money that is not honestly earned and that earns my deep respects. But I'm wondering which old friend has asked you to deliver a letter."

Hei Gezi replied:"If that person does not want to reveal his identity I'm obliged to keep his/her identity a secret. That is my professional code, I also know that you wouldn't force me to reveal his/her identity. But I know this letter concerns a important secret of old master Yu." After saying this he takes out a letter and gives it to Yu.

Yu Fanghe was hesitating for a minute and returned the letter to Hei Gezi and said:"Would you mind opening this letter and loudly read out the contents?"

Hei Gezi said:"But this letter concerns a secret of you...."

Yu Fanghe smiles:"Because of that, I would like you to read it because I have no secrets. And everything in this letter I am not afraid to let anyone know."

Hei Gezi was deeply impressed and smiled:"No secrets at all! Except for you who can say he has no secrets."

Hei Gezi opened the letter and found the pages in it. The pages are stuck together and Hei Gezi wetted his fingers with saliva and separated the pages.

He started to read the letter out loud:"Dear brother....."

Suddenly he fell down with convulsions, Yu Fanghe was startled and quickly rushed over to help. After feeling his pulse he knew that Hei Gezi was soon to die and quickly asked:"Who gave you this letter?" Who?"

Hei Gezi opened his mouth and wanted to say something but couldn't produce a syllable.

Yu saw the colour of Hei's face turn to green from white to from white to red and from red to black. In a matter of seconds the colour of Hei's face shifted 4 times and the flesh of his face disappeared mysteriously leaving behind a black skeleton.

The young man was feeling very frightened by this and exclaimed:"Goodnes! What a deadly poison!"

Out of the robe of Hei Gezi rolled out an ingot of gold, that was the price of the letter also the price of his life.

Yu Fanghe looked at that ingot of gold for some time and picked up the letter.

The young man was startled and said:"What are you going to do, father?"

Yu Fanghe returned to his calm self and said:" This man died because of me, furthermore whoever tried to ambush me will try again and who knows who will be the next innocent victim. It is best that I should die, instead staying alive feeling remosefull of the deaths that are to follow."

The young man said:"But...but, father who wants to harm you? You have never had any grudges with anyone in your life. Who would...."

Suddenly they heard a great explosion, the ingot of gold exploded the force of the explosion was so loud that all the leaves of the tree fell down.

It seemed like Yu Fangfe never moved but in fact during the explosion he retreated for about 11 metres away and returned to the same position after the explosion.

His normal very tranquil eyes were now filled with anger and he made a fist and said:"What a vicious person! This person does not only want to kill me but also wants to kill the messenger. He also calculated that the ingot would explode after delivering the letter."

The young man was also angry and said:"Who can this person be? Not only does he have an evil heart but also a pair of crafty hands. If this person is not stopped,...."

Yu Fanghe interrupted him with a sigh:"Actually we cannot blame this person. If this person really hates me that much and really wants to kill me with that much passion, I must have done something to this person."

The young man had tears in his eyes and said:"Father, you cannot have done anything wrong in your life! The way you treat others, how can people still want to harm you? Is there no more justice in the realm."

Yu Fanghe said:"Peiyu, don't be upset. And don't say there isn't any justice in the world. Every person is bound to make a few mistakes in his life, even I. But at this moment I cannot remember what I did wrong.

At this moment they could hear people from far away shouting:"Where is Yu Fanghe?....."

Where is Yu Fanghe?....."

The shouting, cursing become louder and louder, there were voices of shock and the noise of breaking down of doors. It seems that the servants of the Yu residence couldn't stop these trespassers.

The young man Yu Peiyu was surprised and said:"Who would dare to invade our home?"

Yu Fanghe gently said:"We shouldn't stop visitors from entering, furthermore when they have already entered our home why should you bother going outside to greet them..."Yu Fanghe turned around and smiled:"Do come in."

There were 5 smartly dressed men standing in the courtyard now. They all looked very fierce and ready to kill, however when they saw that father and son Yu were still very much tranquil they were rather shocked. The first man holding a large broad sabre laughed arrogantly:"Yu Fanghe, you despicable fiend! I finally found you!"

During his arrogant laughter he raised his sabre and hacked at Yu Fanghe, the power of the sabre forced the leaves down but Yu Fanghe just stood there not moving seeminly he just wanted to be hacked.

Yu Peiyu didn't even raise his head his finger just moved and everyone heard "Ping" and the man couldn't hold on to his sabre.

One part of his body felt numb and his ears were still humming, the colour of his face changed and stared at this young man. He didn't dare to attack but didn't retreat either.

Yu Fanghe called out:"Peiyu, do not harm them."

Indeed Yu Peiyu now stood still and didn't advance. The man laughed arrogantly again and said:"Of course, Yu Fanghe wants to keep his repuatation as a benevolent man, he will never harm anyone. But I want to kill you old fiend, and if you wound me just a bit you're a hypocrite!"

This man was so incredibly unreasonable and said this in vigorous way, Yu Fanghe was not impressed and smiled:"In that case all of you want to take my life."

The man laughed and said:"You're absolutely right!"

And grabbed his sabre again and called out to the other 4 men:"Brothers, attack!"

A nine ringed sabre, a mourning sword, tiger-headed hook, a judge's brush, a chain spear, 5 weapons were aimed at Yu Fanghe.

At this point someone laughed:"With your abilities you can never harm old master Yu!"

A shadow passed by and dashed towards the 5 weapons, first the sabre flew away and was stuck in a tree, the sword was broken into 2 halves. Judge's brush flew up too, the hook ripped open the abdomen of the sword user and the chained spear was wrapped round the neck of the hook user.

The person was extremely fast and his techniques were like lightning even father and son Yu were impressed.

Now they saw that this person was a handsome young man in a purple robe, his eyes were bright and shining but he looked emotionless. He knelt down and said:"On my way here I overheard these men plotting something against old master Yu. So I decided to follow them and saw that old master Yu was still very polite to your own aggressors and these ruffians were too rude for words. In my anger I might have used too much force, so please forgive me for using force on your premises."

He helped out but did not claim credit but asked to be forgiven.

Yu Fanghe sighed deeply:"No matter what you did it because of me. How can I blame you? Don't ever say things like forgive and so. These 5 men... (*sigh)... I don't know what I've done to them but it has lead to their deaths here."

After awhile he smiled again and turned to this young man and held his hands wanting him to stand up:"You're not only young but also very handsome if you are the son of an old friend that would be most fortunate."

The young man wouldn't get up and said:"Although you don't recognize me, but my life was saved by old master Yu. Old master Yu, you have done numerous benevolent deeds

in your life how can you remember a small child that you once saved."

Yu Fanghe held his hands and said:"Now that child has grown up and even saved my life. It seems...."

Yu Fanghe suddenly stretched his arms and flung that young man away and stepped back three paces. His body was shaking and said in a crackling voice:"Who... who are you?"

The young man landed elegantly on the ground and laughed:"Old man Yu, your palms have contracted my deadly "Instant Ruthless Depraving Needle". Not even an immortal can save you now and you'll never know who I am...

Yu Peiyu is standing next to his father already, and saw that the hands of his father are swolled twice the normal size and were entirely black now. His father looked dead pale and was shaking and couldn't speak anymore.

Yu Peiyu was devastated and shouted:"What grudges do we have? Why do you use such vicious tricks against us!"

The young man laughed, but remained emotionless:"I have no grudge with you nor your father. I just want your lives."

Yu Peiyu looked at the bodies of the 5 dead men and hatefully gritted his teeth:"This is also one of your traps."

The young man replied:"Yes, it is. In order to take your lives not only did we have to sacrifice these 6 men...."

Suddenly he whistled and 20 odd men leapt from the walls holding swords and sabres. Juding by the steps they were all experts but all their faces were veiled with a purple cloth. They were afraid that people might recognize them.

The young man laughed arrogantly:"Yu, surrender now resistance is useless. We were afraid of old Yu's invincible "Golden Silk Palms" but now he is useless. What do you hope to accomplish."

Yu Peiyu looked around and saw that these 20 odd men were quite strong. His heart was filled with grief, pain, anger and also shock.

Any other person would have gone mad or would have attacked his aggressors without any reason anymore. But not him he was different from anyone else. He carried his father on his back and picked up that long brush.

The attackers were advancing forward, they were all a bit surprised by the tranquility shown by Yu Peiyu.

At this point the swords and sabres hacked towards Yu, his entire surroundings were encircled by metallic light. A gush of wind horizontally swept out, the long iron brush made contact with the swords and sabres. Some were broken, bended or flung aside, the men were pushed back and felt a numbness in their shoulders and couldn't raise their arms for awhile.

No one believed that this handsome, gentle young man had such tremendous strength.

Now another group advanced forward but they did not dare to make contact with the brush.

More than 20 men surrounded Yu Peiyu, none of them could penetrate the powerful wind created by the brush, although the force of the brush is very powerful but it was also very stressful after 20 stances Yu Peiyu began to sweat.

The purple robed young man laughed: "Good, tire him out! The rats are trapped and have no place to hide."

Although Yu Peiyu was fighting against those 20 men his eyes were focused on that young vicious man and his hands with the poisonous needles.

Peiyu heard his father's breathing become weaker and weaker, and the enemies are closing in now. He was heart-broken and tired and yelled out: "Enough!"

He also knew if he got away now it will be very difficult to find out who the mastermind is behind this entire plot.

He flung the long brush towards the chest of one the men, this man was terrified and quickly rolled on the ground to avoid being hit. The brush was stuck in the ground and Yu Peiyu used to catapult him and his father over their attackers.

The vicious young man called out:" Chase them, quickly!"

By the time they went outside they couldn't find a trace of them, the young man ordered them to spread and search. However in fact Peiyu hid under a bridge nearby, because he was carrying his father on his back and he exhausted he knew he couldn't outrun them anymore.

One man said:" Should we check under the bridge to....."

The young man angrily said:" Yu is not an idiot, do you think he will stay under the bridge till we find him."

Peiyu stayed hidden for some time and after he felt that the attackers were gone he quickly carried his father back to their house. He put his father on the bed and quickly took out some medicine out of the cupboard. He gave his father some pills, these pills were made by Yu Fanghe and saved many lives how ironic that these pills cannot save his own.

At this time Yu Peiyu burst out in tears, Yu Fanghe's face was black and he opened his mouth and said weakly:" Am I wrong? What...what have I done wrong?"

Yu Peiyu cried out:" Father, you have done nothing wrong in your life!"

Yu Fanghe wanted to smile but the muscles in his face have hardened and he was unable to smile again. With extreme difficulty he uttered his last words:" I did nothing wrong, you must remember my teachings. Always be tolerant and forgiving.... tolerant...and forgiving..."

His voice slowly died out.

Peiyu knelt down and cried for hours on end, the sun had already set.

It was now dark and quiet, but after awhile there were footsteps and judging by the sound this person was walking towards the Yu residence.

Finally, the door was pushed open and this person entered with extreme caution, at this time Yu Peiyu stood up.

The person was startled and called out:"Who are you?"

It should have been Yu Peiyu that should have asked that question, judging by her shadow and figure this intruder was a young, gracious woman.

The girl started shouting angrily:"You fiend, how dare you commit such crime and stay here!"

She drew her sword and stabbed 7 times, her swordsmanship was swift and vicious Peiyu outmanoeuvred her 7 deadly stances and said:"The Flowered Chestnut Swordsmanship?"

The girl scoffed:"You recognize the sword skills of the Lin family. You..."

Yu Peiyu sighed and said:"I am Yu Peiyu."

The girl was stunned and dropped her sword and said in a trembling voice:"Brother Yu, is uncle..."

She looked at the bed and suddenly she knelt down and started crying:"I can't believe it... it is impossible..."

Yu Peiyu stared at her, she cried ever so sad and suddenly she raised her head and said:"I've cried enough, tell me what happened."

Yu Peiyu lighted a lamp and saw that the girl wore mourning clothes and was shocked and asked:"Is uncle Lim....?"

"My father was murdered 6 days ago."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Do you know who was the killer?"

The girl said:"I don't know." The light shone on her pretty face, although she looked somewhat sickly her face was still full of character.

She continued:"You must think it is strange that I don't know who killed my father. That particular day I went out by the time I got back my father was dead and nobody else was around anymore."

Yu Peiyu was feeling sad and was also surprised that a young girl like her was so so strong after going through a disaster herself.

The girl spoke again:"I've cried enough on my way here I cried 5 times."

Yu Peiyu asked:"5 times?"

The girl explained:"Yes, 5 times. Not only are our fathers dead but also unclce Wang, Shen and XiMen.

Yu Peiyu was shocked and said:"Uncle Wang of Taihu uses a pair of golden scissors and is said to be undefeated in his life. Uncles Shen and Ximen both have extraoridinary martial arts how can they be killed."

The girl asked softly:"How about Golden Silk Palms and Flowered Chestnut Swordsmanship?"

Yu Peiyu lowered his head and said:"You're right, but... but could it be that they were all murdered by the same person?" Who could this person be?"

The girl said:"However I haven't seen their bodies."

Yu PeiYu raised his head and asked:"How do you know that they are dead."

The girl replied:"The homes were deserted no one was around. Everyone was gone. The situations were similar to your home and my home."

Yu Peiyu softly said to himself:"Home?...I don't have a home anymore."

The girl watched him and asked:"Where are you going?"

Yu Peitu replied:"Everything is one big conspiracy. I have to investigate and found out the truth. Let me ask you this if

you were the mastermind behind this diabolic conspiracy what would you do to me?"

The girl replied:"Stamp out the source of the problem?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly:"You're right and if you were me what would you do?"

The girl replied:"I would run but to where?"

Yu Peiyu:"Anywhere safe."

The girl said:"Safe... We don't know who our enemy is. He could standing next to us and we don't even know he's our nemesis.What is a safe place?"

Yu Peiyu:"There is one place."

"Where?" the girl asked.

Yu Peiyu replied:"Lake Huang, all the heroes in the world will gather there. This mastermind wouldn't dare to harm us if we're there."

The girl nodded and said coldly:"You've thought everything through. You can go if you want to. Don't worry about me."

And she started walking away, Yu Peiyu didn't stop her but followed her. However after a steps the girl fell down, Yu Peiyu knew that the exhaustion of travelling here and the overwhelming events were too much for her to bear.

Yu Peiyu lifter her up and said some comforting words to her. The girl was feeling better after hearing Yu PeiYu consoling voice and pouted why he didn't ask for her name.

Yu Peiyu said, he already knew her name for a very long time.

Suddenly they heard an old voice:"Young master! Young master!"

Yu Peiyu recognized the voice and knew it was Yu Zhong, the old servant of their house.

The girl said:"When I entered the house I didn't see anyone."

Yu Peiyu replied:"Perhaps he hid during the commotion."

Yu Zhong said:"Young master, Master Wang of Moling has arrived and is waiting in the hall."

Yu PeiYu asked:"Is that Righteous Wang Yuluo second uncle Wang?"

Yu Zhong said it was.

Yu PeiYu quickly went to meet him and saw an elderly distinguished man with a long beard. That was the famous Wang YuLuo.

Yu Peiyu knelt down and sobbed:"Uncle Wang, you're just too late. My father..."

Wang YuLuo sighed:"I know what happened to you and your father. Why did such a thing happen?"

Yu Peiyu sadly wanted to relate what happened:"I..."

Suddenly he raised his head and asked:"How did you know what happened?"

Wang YuLuo smiled:"It was your father that told me everything. My good old brother Yu."

Yu Peiyu was flabbergasted and stammered:"My father....he...he...when...?"

Wang smiled and said:When I saw him he was very upset and ignored completely. Although I don't know why the 2 of you argued but in all these 40 years that I've known your father I've never seen him this upset before. I've asked your third uncle Yun to accompany him and to prevent you and your father to have an argument again."

Yu PeiYu was so shocked and blurted out:"My father ...he was just...killed."

Wang was a bit angered by this remark and chided:"Don't talk nonsense! It's not right to say such a thing even in a fight with your father."

Yu PeiYu yelled out:"But my father is dead, he..."

Wang was now angry and scolded:"Enough already! Silence!"

Yu Peiyu said:"My father's body is right there."Please follow me!"

Wang angrily said:"Alright show me."

Yu lead Wang to his father's room but the bed was empty the body of Yu FangHe was gone.

Wang asked:"Where is this body?"

Yu Peiyu shouted out and rushed into the courtyard and all the 6 corpses were gone and everything was tidied up.

Yu Peiyu was feeling shocked, confused and scared.

Wang angrily said:"What do you have to say now?"

Yu PeiYu stammered:"I...I..."

He saw the girl standing watching them and thought that she could help him out and said:"She saw my father's body, she is Lin Daiyu ,the daughter of Master Lin the Flowered Chestnut Sword."

Wang Yuluo sternly looked at Lin Daiyu and asked:"Is that true what he said?"

Lin Daiyu stuttered:"I...I just..

At this point 4 men walked in. The first man laughed and said:"When did you arrive brother Wang?"

A handsome, elderly gentleman walked in carrying a magnificent sword. Lin Daiyu was shaking when she saw these 4 men. Yu Peiyu has turned pale and looked like if he saw a ghost.

He managed to speak and asked:"Uncle Lin, aren't you...dead?"

These 4 men were

The Dragonking of lake Taihu, Silver Spear Shen, Ximen Feng of Mount Mao and The Flowered Chestnut Sword Lin Shoujuan.

Before Lin Shoujuan could answer, Ximen Feng laughed:"Peiyu how could you say that your future father-in-law is dead? This joke is a bit too much."

Yu Peiyu turned around and looked at Lin Daiyu and said:"You told me... Why did you lie to me?"

Lin Daiyu raised her head and said with her beautiful eyes staring at Peiyu:"Did I say that? When did I say that?"

Yu Peiyu felt the world has gone crazy and backed 5 paces backwards and felt his head spinning.

These 5 Wulin seniors were looking at him coldly, there was some compassion and shock in their eyes.

The old servant Yu Zhong smiled and said:"Young master why don't you accompany the guests for some tea."

Yu Peiyu rushed forward and grabbed him:"Talk! Tell everyone what happened earlier!"

Yu Zhong was a bit surprised and asked:"What happened earlier?"

Yu Peiyu turned even paler, Wang Yuluo asked Yu Zhong:"Did someone else come by today besides us?"

Yu Zhong shook his head and said:"No one came by today."

Yu Peiyu let Yu Zhong go and took a few steps backward and said:"Why do you say that?"

Yu Zhong looked at Yu Peiyu with a lot of compassion in his eyes and said:"Lately young master has been very occupied with his homework so it could be that he..."

Yu Peiyu yelled out:"IT COULD BE THAT I HAVE GONE MAD! RIGHT? THE WAY ALL OF YOU ARE LOOKING AT ME, ALL OF YOU THINK THAT I'VE GONE INSANE!"

Lin Shoujuan sighed:"Perhaps his father was too strict with him. And he has been pushed beyond his limits."

Yu Peiyu screamed out:"YES, I'VE BEEN PUSHED BEYOND MY LIMITS!"

After saying that he punched a deep hole in the wall. At this point Ximen Feng, Wang Yulou and Shen Yinqiang rushed over and grabbed him. Lin Shoujuan took out a small bottle and said:"Listen to me Peiyu take this pill and after a goodnight sleep everything will be just fine."

He wanted to put the pill in Yu's mouth, but Peiyu refused to open his mouth.

Ximen Feng said:"Peiyu, why have changed that much. Do you really think your future father-in-law will harm you."

Suddenly Yu Peiyu pushed out his arms with all his might breaking free from the grip of 3 martial arts experts. The 3 of them were surprised that a young man like him had such extraordinary strength. Yu Peiyu stormed out using his art of levitation.

Ximen Feng exclaimed:"Not even Yu Fanghe had such strength in his younger days."

Wang Yuluo sighed:"It's a shame he has gone mad. Truly a shame."

Lin Daiyu knelt down and started crying.

It was a clear night, Yu Peiyu was looking at the stars. He felt that the stars were laughing at him too.

Suddenly he heard someone crying. Yu Peiyu saw someone standing near a tall tree. It was a short, skinny old man with a long beard. He was standing on a rock and had a rope tied around his neck. He was planning to commit suicide. Yu Peiyu stopped the old man. The old man sobbed:"Please let me die!... I'm the most unfortunate man in the world. Why did you save me? I have nothing to live for anyway."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Are you certain that there isn't anyone more unfortunate than you. Today I lost my family and home, no one believes me. I can trust no one. The people I look up too and respect are now plotting against me, the people that are close to me have turned against me. In merely a day my closest friends and relatives want to take

my life or turn me into a madman. I think I'm the most unfortunate man on the world."

The old man was stunned for a moment and looked at Yu Peiyu and said:"Compared to you my problems aren't that big. You should be the one to commit suicide."After saying that he gave Yu Peiyu the noose and happily laughed and left this place.

Yu Peiyu looked at the back of this strange old man and tried the noose on and was thinking to himself:"This is very easy, after I'm dead there will be no more problems and worries. Should I really die?"

After thinking that he laughed heartily and said:"Well, I've died once now."

He removed the noose and set course for Lake Huang.

Because he didn't have any money he often had to rely on the generosity of other people. Fortunately the generous people he met on the way were women, young women who were very happy to share their food with this extremely handsome young man.

But the only thing Yu PeiYu had on his mind was:"Patience....patience!"

His clothes were worn out and he looked very much like a beggar when he entered the Henan province (Lake Huang is located in this province).

He saw many Wulin people walking about in these parts. Nobody paid any attention to this young beggar.

The gathering at Lake Huang was nearing and Yu Peiyu was pondering outside one night about what Lin Shoujuan and the others were planning, why did they say that Yu Fanghe wasn't dead.

Suddenly another young beggar came up to him and smiled and asked:"I take it you don't belong to our Beggars Association?"

Yu Peiyu shook his head.

The young beggar laughed:"If you're not a beggar you shouldn't be hogging the places of true beggars."

Yu Peiyu smiled and apologized and stood up.

Yu was gazing at the stars, the young beggar stared at him for awhile. It seemed that he found this young man quite interesting and tapped on Yu's shoulder and asked:"Judging by your accent you should be from the Su province."

Yu Peiyu said he was from the Su province.

The young beggar asked for his name.

Yu Peiyu observed him for an instant and he felt the the beggar had no hostile intentions and told him:"My name is Yu Peiyu."

The young beggar said:"My name is Lian Honger."

Yu Peiyu said:"Brother Lian."

Lian Honger smiled and said:"You're a good person, you're willing to call a man brother who cannot even pay for his own food."

Yu PeiYu smiled wryly and said:"I'm no much better than you."

Lian Honger observed Yu and said:"It seems that your martial arts foundation is quite good, if I'm not mistaken you must be a member of a Wulin family. But why are you disguised like this?"

Yu PeiYu was surprised and said:"I'm... not.. disguised. I do..not know any martial arts."

Lian Honger was a bit annoyed and scoffed:"You dare to deceive me."

He raised his baboo cane and aimed for Yu's "Lingxu" acupoint. The cane moved very quickly , although the beggar aimed for the Lingxu acupoint the force of the cane was pressing towards the 18 major acupoints.

Yu Peiyu suffered from a huge calamity and believed that almost anyone could be in cahoots with this mysterious "mastermind."

He swiftly evaded the attack, but Liang Honger withdrew his attack.

He looked at Yu Peiyu and said coldly: "Telling lies at such a young age, what will become of you when you grow up."

Yu Peiyu looked down and said: "I have my reasons."

Lian Honger asked: "Could you tell me, perhaps?"

Yu Peiyu replied: "If you have your reasons would you reveal your reasons to someone you don't even know?"

Lian Honger stared at him for a moment and smiled: "Although you look very polite but this was a very sharp answer."

He continued: "I'm afraid you have come in vain, you can't go to the gathering at Lake Huang."

Yu Peiyu was startled and asked: "How do you know?"

Lian Honger: "My eyes are like a magic mirror, one look and I know what the intentions are of the other person."

Yu Peiyu stared at him in awe.

Lian Honger said: "Without an invitation you cannot attend the gathering or you have to be a disciple of the 13 Great martial arts schools."

Yu Peiyu said: "I don't have an invitation and I don't belong to the 13 great martial arts schools."

Lian Honger nodded and said: "It's best for you to leave."

Yu asked: "Does the Beggars Association belong to the 13 Great Schools?"

Liang Honger replied: "Yes, of course. Although Shaolin has been elected to be the chancellor of Wulin for the past 40 years but without the support of us. The position as chancellor was taken over by Wudang or Kunlun years ago."

Yu Peiyu said:"Well, if I mingled with the other disciples of the Beggars Association, I could..."

Lian Honger laughed:"You've thought it out, have you?"

Yu PeiYu knelt down and asked:"Could you perhaps help me? If you would ask your leader on behalf of me if I could attend the gathering."

Lian Honger smiled:"Why should I help you, I hardly know you."

Yu Peiyu got up and said:"Because.... because.."

Yu Peiyu sighed and left, Lian Honger smilingly looked at him.

After walking for awhile Yu PeiYu saw torches burning in front of him and people clapping and singing.

It was a group of beggars, Yu Peiyu didn't want to see anyone and wanted to walk the other way.

An old beggar walked towards him and said:"Young master Yu, our leader knew you would come therefore..."

Yu Peiyu said loudly:"I don't know your leader."

The old beggar smiled:"Although you don't know our leader. But he has heard of you and has instructed us to welcome you and to give you something."

Yu Peiyu readied his fists and scoffed:"Bring it on!"

The old beggar laughed:"You're mistaken, young master Yu. We have no hostile intentions."

The old beggar took out a yellow envelope and respectfully handed it over to Yu.

Yu Peiyu took the letter but didn't open it, he remembered the letter of death. And gave the letter back to the old beggar and said you open it and lick the envelope first.

The old beggar smiled:"Young master Yu is a very cautious person."

The beggar did what he was instructed and handed the letter to Yu.

Yu Peiyu felt a bit embarrassed and saw it was an invitation to the gathering at Lake Huang. He was startled and when he looked up the beggars were gone.

Yu Peiyu was really confused the past events he encountered were all very strange.

And why did the leader of the Beggars Association give him an invitation?

He stood there not moving for quite some time when he heard some people walking over here.

"Don't move!" a voice said.

Yu Peiyu sighed and turned around and saw 7 men standing there. 2 of them were Taoists, 1 was a monk and 1 young woman.

All 7 of them were quite young and had a very good martial arts foundation.

A young man in a black robe asked:"What are you doing here?"

Yu Peiyu scoffed at this man's rude tone:"You're not even allowed to stand here?"

The monk said politely:"Benefactor, I'm Songshui of Shaolin. These are martial arts brothers and sisters of Wudang, Kunlun, Huashan, Diancang and Kongtong. Because the gathering of Lake Huang is soon to be held here the 13 masters of the Great Schools are afraid that some misfits might come here and wreak havoc. That's why disciples of the 13 schools are instructed to keep watch here."

Yu Peiyu exclaimed:"You're disciples of the 13 Great Schools?..."

"Is this your invitation?" the young man in the black robe asked rudely.

Yu Peiyu replied: "Yes, it is."

Suddenly this young man drew his sword with incredible speed, this young man was indeed worthy of being a disciple of the 13 Great Schools. Yu Peiyu was taken by surprise and avoided this sudden attack with everything he got. He almost got his ear cut off. He was angered and yelled out: "What are you doing! Is this invitation a fake!"

The young man scoffed: "It is not a fake."

And continued his attack, Yu Peiyu avoided his 17 stances and shouted: "What is going on here?"

The young woman coldly said: "We can fight after we've asked a few questions."

The young man listened and stopped his attack and fiercely asked: "Tell us, where did you get this invitation?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Someone gave it to me."

The young man laughed: "Did you hear that everyone? Someone gave it to him."

Yu Peiyu was very annoyed and said: "What is so funny about that?"

The Shaolin monk Songshui put up a serious face and said: Benefactor, this invitation is ...too real. Seven different types of invitations were issued for this gathering. Your invitation is yellow, this is only given to leaders of martial arts schools or famous, respected Wulin seniors. Also only the 13 leaders are allowed to give away these invitations. And benefactor, you are neither..."

The young man finished the sentence for Songshui and said coldly: "By the looks of it you're not befriended with the 13 masters, so you must have gotten this invitation by fraudulent means."

After saying this the young man drew his sword again and the 7 of them surrounded Yu Peiyu. Even the young woman didn't speak anymore.

Yu Peiyu knew this was a misunderstanding and was resenting that wicked leader of the Beggars Association. Could it be that the leader of the Beggars Association did this on purpose?

The young man didn't back away and used the genuine Diancang swordsmanship, the famous "Descending Petals and Flying Flower Sword."

This type of sword techniques was famous for being fast and vicious and not easily avoided.

Yu Peiyu couldn't counter-attack and was really having a difficult time now.

The young woman said: "Surrender now, or do you really want to..."

Before she could finish her sentence everyone heard a loud laughter and everyone looked up and saw a shadow moving by with incredible speed. In an instant the figure also disappeared only red flower petals descended from the sky.

The young man exclaimed: "A red lotus!"

The Shaolin monk Songshui said: "Benefactor, you're a close friend of Master Hong Lian. Please forgive me for being rude."

The young man smiled wryly and said: "You...sir, why didn't you tell us that you were befriended with master Hong Lian."

Yu Peiyu was stunned and said: "I don't know Hong Lianhua (Red lotus)."

The young man respectfully said: "Again please forgive me for being rude."

Yu Peiyu just stood there smiling wryly, the young woman gazed at Yu Peiyu with her pretty eyes and said: "My name is Zhong Jing of Huashan, our school has organised a place to

welcome our distinguished guests just ahead. Since sir is a good friend of master Hong Lian, you're also a good friend of Huashan. Please honour us by attending our reception."

The young man applauded and said:"That is a good idea and tomorrow our school will prepare a carriage to take sir to the gathering."

Yu Peiyu thought for awhile and complied.

Yu Peiyu was brought to a rather nice looking place and was very puzzled who this Hong Lianhua was and was thinking what this Hong's motives could be.

Suddenly he saw 14 portraits hanging on a wall, he saw Taoists priests, Buddhist monks, women, beggars although different in ages. But their expressions were all very impressive and stern.

Zhong Jing smiled:"These are the 14 portraits of the founders of the Gathering at Lake Huang, 70 years ago Wulin faced great calamities. But ever since the first gathering the lives of Wulin people has become more peaceful. These efforts of these 14 seniors is indeed great."

Yu Peiyu just stared at the final portrait, the portrait was of an elderly distinguished man looking very tranquil.

Zhong Jing smiled:"Sir, you must be surprised, why there isn't a painting of abbot Fanyin of Shaolin or reverend Tiejian of Wudang. This is old master Yu, he was the first senior that organised the Gathering of Lake Huang, Xiantian Wuji (Congenital No Extreme) school was at that time very famous and not inferior to Shaolin and Wudang."

Yu Peiyu sighed softly and said:"I know."

Zhong Jing continued:"Old master Yu lead the Gathering 3 times, and was a very much respected member of the gatherings. 30 years ago "Old Man Fanghe" became the leader of the Xiantian Wuji School and retreated out of the gatherings. My teacher and the masters of Shaolin and Wudang several tried to persuade him to stay but he

declined. Senior Yu was a person who did not like these matters and retired from Wulin at the age of 30. Meaning there are only 13 Schools left."

This beautiful and young Huashan disciple kept her eyes on Yu Peiyu the entire time when she narrated this Wulin history. Yu Peiyu felt sad and didn't speak. He couldn't sleep the entire night and the next morning he heard Zhong Jing outside his room saying sweetly: "Sir, are you awake, Diancang brother Yang JunBi has come to pick you up."

Zhong Jing was still looking as charming as ever and the Diancang disciple Yang Junbi was also very respectful.

Yang spoke: "Sir, my leading martial arts brother is awaiting outside, in the carriage."

Yu Peiyu thanked him and walked outside.

It was a big carriage and already 9 people were inside, all quite young. One young man wore a purple robe and a young pretty girl wore a yellow dress. They were "The young master of the divine sabre" and Jin Yanzi (Golden Swallow). 2 Taoist priests, and another young man in a yellow robe and a sword. Yu didn't see his face, this man stuck his head out of the window and was talking to a friend.

Yu Peiyu just gave these people a quick glance and remained silent. He didn't want to talk and didn't wanted people talking to him.

Zhong Jing said: "Sir, we'll see each other during the gathering."

The doors of the carriage were closed and the the young man in the yellow robe turned around and smiled: "Who is the friend of Hong Lianhua?"

He had a pair of bright shining eyes and looked quite pale. He was the one who ambushed the father of Yu Peiyu, Yu Fanghe.

Yu Peiyu was trembling, when everyone heard he was the friend of Hong Lianhua everyone admired him. He just

stared at that yellow robed young man.

The young man spoke and smiled lightly: "My name is Xie Tianbi, I am also an old friend of master Hong Lian. May I ask what your name is?"

Yu Peiyu yelled out: "You...you do not recognize me, but I recognize you!"

He aimed his fists towards that Xie Tianbi, the force was incredible everyone in the carriage felt a strong wind coming towards them.

Xie Tianbi was taken by surprise and could avoid those 2 blows with difficulty and shouted: "What are you doing?"

Yu Peiyu continued his attack and said: "You will not escape today, I have looked for you high and low."

Xie Tianbi was angered and surprised and fortunately for him the carriage was big enough for him to manoeuvre around and avoided another 7 fists and said angrily: "I have never met you before in my life. Why do you atta...."

Yu Peiyu shouted: "Six days ago you killed my father, now you will die!"

He stretched his left fist and his right fist pushed out, this stance was called "Earth-Shattering and Heaven-Battering."

Xie Tianbi couldn't avoid this stance anymore, he too pushed out a fist and countered Yu's attack. But during the exchange of fists Xie was pushed against the door of the carriage.

Yu Peiyu advanced forward, 3, 4 voices called out: "Cease and desist!"

Yu saw knew that 3 swords were aimed at his back, 2 hooks were aimed for his neck and a short, sharp sabre was aimed towards his chest. The sabre was a good weapon, before actually making contact with Yu, Yu felt the coldness of the blade.

Xie Tianbi was looking very pale and angrily asked:"What are you talking about? Who is your father? I don't know what you're talking about?"

Yu Peiyu calmly said:"You know."

Yu leant towards the left and landed in the chest of a taoist priest using a hook and pushed him down, with his right hand Yu diverted the other hook to block the 2 swords. With his elbow he hit the third person using the sword, the man was hit in his waist. He cried out in pain.

However the young man using the sabre had his weapon still aimed at Yu's chest.

This young man was the young master of the divine sabre. He coldly spoke:"You have remarkable abilities, but I suggest you would sit down and discuss this slowly."

He moved his sabre slightly and Yu's robe was sliced open and the sharp tip pointed at his chest. He had no choice but to sit down. At this time the man who was hit in his waist got up and looked very wryly.

Everyone in the carriage was in awe now, this unknown young man was able to push the famous young leader of the Diancang School back, and with one stance was able to strike down a renowned wielder of the "Touring Dragon Swordsmanship" Wu Tao. Although Yu had the element of surprise but what he did was still remarkable.

A big fellow spoke:"You have good martial arts but you are truly to rash. Why do attack brother Xie? Could it be that you have mistaken him for someone else."

Yu said:"Even if he turned to dust I will recognize him, 6 days ago he used a dispicable and lowly trick to kill my father in the city of Moling."

Xie Tianbi said:"You must be dreaming, I just arrived from Mount Diancang. On my way never stopping I've never even been to the city of Moling or even near that place."

Yu angrily called out:" You've never been there?"

One of the Taoist priest said seriously:"I can vowe for master Xie."

Yu Peiyu said:"Why should I believe you."

The Taoist priest scoffed:"The Two Friends of Immortal Mists" never tell a lie."

Yu Peiyu was stunned he has heard of "The Two Friends of Immortal Mists" before and knew that the 2 of them didn't have any extraordinary skills but were famous for their chivalry and good reputation. And knew their words are to be trusted but can he deny what he saw with his own eyes?

The young master of the divine sabre said:"Now, what have you to say?"

Yu Peiyu ground his teeth.

Wu Tao could finally stand up straight now and said:"We cannot let him go. The gathering is about to start and he attacked brother Xie. He must have received orders from someone and must have other plans up his sleeve."

The pretty young woman Jin Yanzi remained silent and looked at the situation with an aloof stare now coldly said:"Of course, master Wu wants to pay back that blow on the waist."

Wu Tao's faced turned red and wanted to speak but he saw the sword stuck on Jin Yanzi waist and the Jade Dragon sabre the young master of the divine sabre held.

Xie Tianbi spoke now and asked:"Miss Jin, what do you suggest?"

Jin Yanzi not looking at Yu said:"I think this person must be a madman, just let him go."

The young master said:"No! Even if we are to let him go we should interrogate him thoroughly."

Jin Yanzi scoffed and turned her head away.

Wu Tao agreed with the young master.

The young master coldy said to Wu Tao:"I do not need your help."

The carriage stopped now and everyone could hear voices outside. They must have arrived at a city.

Yu Peiyu didn't speak anymore, he didn't know what to say at this point.

Xie Tianbi said:"I'm very busy at the moment, if brother Sima wants to take over this affair I'm too happy. But what about master Hong Lian."

Before he could finish, someone called out:" Master Xie are you in the carriage? Is young master Yu with you?"

The speaker put his head through the window of the carriage, Yu recognized him as the old beggar who gave him the invitation.

One of "Two Friends of Immortal Mists" spoke happily:"Mei Simang, I haven't seen you for years. Are you still that busy?"

The old beggar, Mei Simang laughed:"I have some matters at hand today. Our leader has instructed me to invite young master Yu for a meeting. Afterwards I will drink to a heart's contend with you 2 false Taoist priests?"

Mei ignored the young masters' sabre and held Yu's arm and pulled him out of the carriage and smiled:"Young master Yu, do you know that the most righteous and friendly Wulin association is the Beggars Association, the most wealthy Wulin school is Diancang. Young master is indeed fortunate to sit in such a luxurious carriage. Master Xie, our leader will invite for a drink after this."

The young master of the divine sabre looked very unhappy about this situation but didn't speak.

Xie Tianbi smiled:"Tell master Hong Lian, I will be too happy to drink with him."

There was a lot of commotion outside, but Yu was also very confused.

This Xie Tianbi was obviously the killer of my father, but what is going on here? And who is this master Hong Lian? And why does he help me?

He heard Mei Simang whisper to him: "Don't stand just stand here, look around."

Yu turned around and saw a pair of clear, beautiful eyes looking at him. Coldly but yet full of love.

Mei Simang tapped on the shoulder of Yu and softly laughed: "This little swallow is full of sharp needles, watch out. Also the green-eyed monster is lurking besides her with the Jade Dragon Sabre. One look is enough. I think the interesting commotion ahead is much more peaceful."

Chapter 2 : The Sudden Change of Dragon and Tiger

Hong Lianhua and Yu Xuan were still smiling but they were very cautious now. They had also heard of the three killing specialties of Baihua Association, The Soul-dissolving Flower, The Bone Gnawing Rain and the Heavenly Fragrant Fog. To their knowledge no one had been able to avoid any of these specialties without injuries.

Lake Huang is an ancient name derived from the Spring and Autumn Period (707 - 480 B.C).

At this moment everyone could see 13 flagpoles with 13 impressive banners.

Mei Simang pointed at a yellow silk banner and explained to Yu Peiyu: "Yellow represents prominence and only the leading martial arts school is allowed to use it. At the moment that is Shaolin.

Taoism often refers to the colour purple, that's why the banner of Wudang is purple. "The Eight Stances of Heavenly Dragon" of Kunlun are known far and wide. For that reason there are several flying dragons embroidered on their banner. It looks very impressive, don't you think?"

Yu peiyu looked at a banner made out of several small pieces of different coloured cloths and asked: "Is this the banner of the Beggars Association?"

Mei Simang laughed: "We ARE poor beggars and we use the the materials that other people throw away and made a banner out of it. We are very thrifty."

Yu peiyu asked: "May I ask where master Hong Lian is at the moment? I would like to pay my respects."

Mei Simang said: "Beneath every flag-pole there is a large tent, our leader is resting right over there in that tent." Mei pointed at a tent farther up ahead.

As they walked towards the tent, many people looked very respectfully at Mei and Yu and greeted them very humbly.

Yu Peiyu thought:"The Beggars Association has been able to remain the most important Wulin association for more than 100 years. Even the disciples have amazing abilities and prestige, their leader must be even more impressive. But when did I meet such an important and prominent man."

The more he pondered over it the more confused he got and as they approached the tent he saw 20 to 30 young men and women partrolling. Judging by their appearances and all of them looked seemed to have good martial arts. But everyone of them wore different types of robes, they must be the top-notch disciples of the 13 Great Schools.

Before Mei Simang could say something a Taoist priest in a purple robe approached him and humbly said:"Old master Mei, you have arrived. This is...?"

Mei Simang laughed:"Hahaha!Taoist brother, this young master Yu and is an honourable guest."

Yu Peiyu already took out his invitation and held it up. The Taoist priest backed 3 paces and said:"This was, please."

Yu Peiyu looked back and now fully realised the safety precautions taken by the 13 Great Schools. He considered himself very lucky, because a large number of Wulin people were not allowed to enter and could only walk about outside the agreed perimeter.

Mei Simang approached the tent and respectfully said:"Master, young master Yu is here."

The voice said:"Please let him in! He must be very anxious now."

Indeed Yu Peiyu wanted to know who this mysterious leader was and really couldn't wait anymore. Mei and him walked in and entered a very luxurious tent, he couldn't clearly see the face of the leader and knelt down and said humbly:"Yu Peiyu pays his respects to master Hong Lian."

Master Hong Lian turned around and smiled:"Brother Yu, don't you recognize anymore?"

Yu Peiyu saw a pair of bright, shining eyes and stuttered:"You..you..are you the leader of the Beggars Association?"

Master Hong Lian is the young beggar, Hong Lianer he met earlier.

Yu Peiyu was still too surprised to speak, Hong Lianhua laughed:"Not all leaders of Wulin schools are old, for example the leader of Diancang isn't even 30 yet. The leader of the Baihua (100 flowers) Association is also only 20 odd years old."

Yu Peiyu said:"No wonder why master Hong Lian kept helping me."

Hong Lianhua said:"There was no particular reason, and I like you. Wulin is a strange place, some people want to kill you for strange motives and some want to help for mysterious reasons."

Yu Peiyu agreed and sighed:"True!"

Hong Lianhua now stopped smiling and seriously asked him:"Judging from your expression, the gathering seems very important to you."

Yu Peiyu tragically said:"A matter of life and death."

Hong Lianhua continued:"It would be unfair if a bunch of idlers were allowed to enter, when people like you who really have important matters are not allowed to participate."

Yu Peiyu respectfully said:Master Hong Lian, thank you for helping me."

Hong Lianhua smiled:"Also you are soon to be the next leader of the Xiantian Wuji School, when that happens we cannot even invite you over even if we gave you 100 invitations."

Yu Peiyu stuttered:"How did you know?"

At this point they heard a loud "Boing" and they heard a strong, clear voice saying:"The gathering is about to start. Would the 13 leaders please take their seats."

Hong Lianhua held Yu Peiyu's hand and smiled:"All the previous leaders of the Beggars Association were not only notorious busybodies, but also had to have the ability to know practically everything. As to how I know that much about you know, you will soon find out."

A huge platform was constructed for this occasion and many Wulin dignitaries were present.

There was a big cauldron on the platform and it emitted a white smoke. On each side of the cauldron there was a row of armchairs. 13 in total, and already nine people were seated now.

An old monk with a white long beard wearing a yellow kasya stood in front of the cauldron. Although he was quite small and skinny he looked very majestic. Obviously this old monk was the abbot of the Shaolin Monastery, reverend Tianyun.

Under the platform there were several rows of armchairs, and several famous Wulin dignitaries were sitting there. However no one sat at the first row, which was a strange thing.

Hong Lianhua smiled to Yu:"I have to go up there and perform now, just find a seat having a yellow invitation automatically means that you have a seat. Don't be shy."

Hong Lianhua and 6 beggars walked up the platform.

A deep, strong voiced announced:"The leader of the Beggars Association, master Hong Lien!"

The announcer was a very tall and big man, Hong Lianhua was much smaller compared to him. But the eyes of all the attending heroes were shifted from the announcer to Hong Lienhua.

Yu Peiyu smiled when he saw this he felt proud to have a friend like Hong Lianhua.

A clear, lovely said to him:"Seeing that your friend is so impressive, you must feel proud too, don't you?"

Yu Peiyu turned around and saw a pair of cold, clear eyes but somehow also he saw a bit of passion in these eyes. Jin Yanzi was talking to him. Coincidentally, he sat next to her he smiled back but didn't say a word.

The young master of the divine sabre was not pleased and looked quite annoyed now.

He said to Jin Yanzi:"Yan-Er, shall we sit somewhere else?"

Jin Yanzi coldly asked:"Why should I sit somewhere else?"

The young master answered:"Somehow the air around here seems not so fresh anymore."

Jin Yanzi said:"If you find it smelly here you can go and find a new seat. I'm staying right here."

Yu Peiyu already stood up and wanted to find a new place to sit. However Jin Yanzi's delicate, soft hand held his wrist, the young master was furious now.

He angrily said:"Fine, fine! I will go away."

Although he said that he remained seated and didn't leave Jin Yanzi out of sight.

Yu was quite amused by this situation and secretly laughed.

Although Yu Peiyu didn't fully understand what love meant at this point in his life but he knew it was sweet and bitter. After gazing into the eyes of Jin Yanzi he remembered Lin Daiyu. He remembered her eyes, expression, her strong personality and beauty. And asked why she tricked him.

The announcer loudly introduced someone else now:"The leader of the Baihua (100 flowers)Association, Madame Hai Tangjun!" (*Hai Tang is a kind of Chinese cherry blossom).

12 young maidens carried a sedan-chair decorated with fragrant flowers. Everyone was enchanted by the scent of those flowers. On top of the sedan-chair was a beautiful, enchanting woman wearing a tempting silk gown and lots of

garlands. She got off the sedan-chair and one of the maidens held her hand, everyone was captivated by her fragrance and allure.

Jin Yanzi softly sighed to Yu Peiyu: "This Madame Hai Tang is indeed a true beauty."

Yu Peiyu didn't answer he was looking into the crowd looking for someone.

12 of the 13 leaders of the Great Schools have arrived.

Yu Peiyu was hoping to see someone, could he be wrong. Wouldn't "they" make an appearance here?

The attending heroes were all wondering: "The leader of the Hainan School hasn't arrived yet. Why is that?"

Could it be that master Yu is detained, because he lives in the outer south of China?"

The heroes kept talking about the leader of the Hainan School, Yu Xuan, why he is late.

Suddenly everyone was quiet and looked at a man, Yu Peiyu watched that man too. It was a rather fat man wearing a green robe and staggered like a drunk. In his waist was an old sword and judging by his expression he was a drunk. He didn't seem to care that everyone was staring at him.

The announcer frowned and loudly introduced: "The leader of the Hainan School, master Yu Xuan!"

This is the impressive "The Flying Fish and the Swift Sword" Yu Xuan. It is said that he is unbeaten throughout the 18 isles of the South Sea.

He walked up the platform and laughed: "Sorry, I'm late. Please forgive me."

The abbot of Shaolin gave him a Buddhist greeting by putting his palms together.

A Taoist priest wearing a black robe coldly smiled: "Brother Yu, you're not too late. You could have drunk a few more cups before joining us."

Yu Xuan blinked his eyes and laughingly said:"Well, some people see the fun of liquor and some don't. I cannot help it if the KongTong School prohibits drinking. I have nothing else to say to the likes of you."

The black-robed Taoist priest got up and sternly said:"The gathering does NOT welcome drunkards like you."

Yu Xuan didn't pay any attention to him and sat down.

The abbot of Shaolin smiled and said:"Taoist brother Jueqing, please don't be upset...."

Jueqing Zi angrily said:"This man is late because he was getting himself drunk. Because of his drinking he could have delayed the prospects and future of all heroes of the realm. He should be punished accordingly otherwise how can we establish discipline."

Abbot Tianyun turned to the leader of Wudang reverend Chuchen, reverend Chuchen got up and said:"Master Yu...."

Before he could finish, Hong Lianhua laughed:"Do all of you think that master Yu is late because he went drinking?"

Reverend Chuchen smiled:"I think the information master Hong Lian gathered will enlighten us."

Hong Lianhua loudly said:"Master Yu was able to lure "The 7 Hornets of the White Forest" to a remote place and killed them all. With this act he re-assured the safety of all the women of the gathering. I, Hong Lianhua would like to thank him."

All the heroes were shocked to hear that the infamous rapists "The 7 Hornets of the White Forest" were able to sneak into the city. Luckily Yu Xuan killed them otherwise who knows which poor woman or girl will fall victim.

Shaolin was the organizer of this time's gathering if anything happened they would be held responsible. Although abbot Tianyun has extraordinary cultivation he was still surprised.

Yu Xuan smiled in a carefree manner:"Master Hong Lian is really knowledgeable. Even small matters like this do not escape your attention."

Abbot Tianyun earnestly said:"Benefactor Yu, how can you say that this is a small matter? You have done a great deed by this action alone you're fit to be the new chancellor of Wulin."

If anyone else said these words it probably would be plain polite words of formality. But these words were said by the abbot of Shaolin and carry a very strong weight. With this sentence alone Yu Xuan could very well be the next chancellor of Wulin for the next 7 years.

Yu Xuan respectfully said:"If I hadn't disposed of those rogues, I'm sure master Hong Lian would have."

Hong Lianhua hurriedly said:"Beggars cannot become leaders of the martial arts realm, we will become the laughing-stock of the entire world. Abbot Tianyun is highly respected in Wulin and I feel that we should ask reverend Tianyun to lead us one more time."

Abbot Tianyun sighed:"I am too old now to lead the realm of martial arts. Even without this incident I have no intentions of becoming chancellor again."

It seems that Shaolin had no ambitions to lead again, but who dares to follow the footsteps of Shaolin.

But abbot Tianyun has expressed to retreat freely, at this point the other leaders stood up.

The leader of the Huashan School, the graceful Taoist priestess Xu Shuzhen said with her clear voice:"Wudang has been the orthodox Taoist school for many years. If abbot Tianyun really stays adamant in his decision. I will certainly support Wudang."

Reverend Chuchen smiled and sat down.

The leader of the Kongtong school scoffed:"Of course Wudang will receive support from Huashan. Unfortunately I

do NOT have a sister who is the leader of the Huashan School."

Xu Shuzhen and reverend Chuchen are brother and sister, coincidentally both became leaders of the 2 prominent martial arts schools. Which is a exemplary tale, however now it became an excuse for Jueqing Zi to make fun of them both.

Xu Shuzhen raised her pretty eyebrows, reverend Chuchen smiled:"In that case I nominate reverend Jueqing."

Xie Tianbi loudly said:"If someone else would lead Wulin we, Diancang will have no objections. However, we do have some objections to Kongtong and reverend Jueqing."

Although the Diancang School was located in Yunnan province, but disciples of Diancang were very much respected and the words of the leader of Diancang carried a lot weight in Wulin.

Jueqing Zi's face changed and said:"It seems that in order to pick a new chancellor there must be a fight."

Xie Tianbi held his sword and said:"In that case I would like to encounter the world famous "Merciless Swordsmanship."

At this point an old man with a long beard stood up and said:"I, Ouyang Long on behalf of the 36 united heroes of the waters, nominate master Xie of the Diancang School. As for reverend Jueqing's "Merciless Swordsman...."

Before he could finish a bald old man with a rather fair, red young face laughed and said:"Diancang School lies in the outer regions of China, if master Xie becomes the chancellor he will have no control over lord Ouyang. In that case lord Ouyang is free to do whatever he likes."

Ouyang Long angrily said:"What do you mean with those words! It can be that everyone else fears the secretive weaponry of the Tang Clan of Sichuan province. But I AM NOT AFRAID OF YOU!"

The bald old man smiled:"So you want to try it, don't you?"

He waved his hand and Ouyang Long quickly leapt backwards.

The bald old man stroked his beard and laughed: "Lord Ouyang is very courageous indeed."

Abbot Tianyun saw that the entire matter was getting out of hand and frowned his eyebrows and said: "Would everyone settle down! It was not my intention to create chaos."

Despite all the noise everyone could hear the voice of abbot Tianyun clearly and everybody settled down.

Now, a large muscular man jumped up the platform. He was as tall and impressive as the announcer he lifted the heavy cauldron with ease.

All the heroes applauded when seeing this. Even Yu Peiyu exclaimed: "This man is truly awesome!"

Jin Yanzi immediately spoke: "He is one of the leading figures of the Wulin of the northern regions of China. Everyone calls him 'The Invincible Iron Overlord.' His arms are very strong and can easily lift heavy objects. But he is not too intelligent."

Yu Peiyu still didn't talk to her and watched the Iron Overlord carrying the cauldron walking about on the platform.

He put the cauldron down and shouted: "Whoever can lift this cauldron and can easily walk 3 steps on the platform I will support him becoming the new chancellor of Wulin!"

All the present dignitaries on the platform were all martial arts experts but this ability was something they could not do.

As result nobody said a word.

The Iron Overlord was feeling very pleased and was looking arrogantly.

Madame Hai Tang walked up to the Iron Overlord and smiled sweetly: "I never thought I would have the chance to see the Iron Tyrant Strength. I really admire your strength."

The Iron Overlord was mesmerized by her charm and beauty and cleared his throat and smiled dryly: "You're too kind, Madame."

She stared at him and said very tenderly: "That awesome power you displayed, is it really generated through these 2 arms?"

The fragrance of her was really quite strong, even if you stood metres from her you would still be captivated by her sweet scent. And now she just stood a few centimetres away from the Iron Overlord he was already practically under her spell and had difficulty standing still.

Madame Hai Tang innocently asked: "Can I touch your arms?"

The Iron Overlord blushed and stuttered: "Ma...Madame....I...uhh...I"

The delicate soft hands of Madame Hai Tang were already touching, stroking the arm of the Overlord. He was completely lost what to do and just stood there blushing.

Hong Lianhua called out: "Brother Tie, pay attention!"

But it was too late, he felt an iron grip and couldn't move anymore. Madame Hai Tang smilingly held up the Iron Overlord with ease.

A muscular big man was being held up in the air by a graceful young woman. This was a scene that no one will ever forget.

Nobody knew whether to clap their hands or laugh.

Madame Hai Tang now sighed sweetly: "Whoever can lift this true "HERO" I will support him in becoming the next chancellor of Wulin."

After saying this she put the Iron Overlord down and smiled tenderly and walked back to her seat.

The Iron Overlord could move again but was too confused to do anything and just stared at her in a silly way.

Yu Xuan approached Madame Hai Tang and laughed:"Madame, could I borrow a garland from you?"

Madame Hai Tang blinked her eyes and said:"If master Yu was a bit slimmer I will be very happy to give you one of....."

Before she could finish her sentence she saw that on top Yu Xuan's tip of the sword was one of her garlands. Nobody could see clearly when, how Yu Xuan drew his sword and how he managed to remove a garland from Madame Hai Tang.

She quickly paced back 3 steps and looked quite pale now.

Hong Lianhua laughed:"Madame, since you gave away one of your garlands to master Yu. Why don't you wear one of my red lotuses."

During his laughter he advanced forward very quickly and before everyone knew it a red lotus was stuck between the hair of Madame Hai Tang.

The display of Hong Lianhua's unique art of levitation was truly amazing even the leader of Kunlun renowned for his "Eight Stances of Heavenly Dragon" was impressed and felt he couldn't do this either.

Madame Hai Tang looked very pale now and she put both of her hands in her sleeves and smiled:"Two grown men picking on a helpless woman. Aren't you afraid people will talk?"

Although she smiled ever so charming, all the heroes had heard of the three killing specialties of Baihua Association; flower, fog and rain.

At this point she must have prepared her hands in her sleeves and was about to strike.

Hong Lianhua and Yu Xuan were still smiling but they were very cautious now. They also have heard of the three killing specialties of Baihua Association, The Soul-dissolving Flower, The Bone Gnawing Rain and the Heavenly Fragrant Fog.

To their knowledge no one was able to avoid any of these specialties without injuries.

But the fast sword of Yu Xuan was also not to be trifled with.

At this very exciting moment a figure stood in between Yu Xuan and Madame Hai Tang. It was abbot Tianyun who quickly intervened all the experts present didn't see when and how he stood in between them.

Abbot Tianyun said:"There are numerous variations in martial arts, everyone has their advantages and disadvantages. If all of you would engage in meaningless battles not only will it be difficult to find a victor but everyone will become the laughing-stock of the world."

Everyone kept quiet, reverend Chuchen asked:"Abbot Tianyun, what do you suggest?"

Abbot Tianyun answered:"When it comes to martial arts everyone has his or her strong points. And when it comes to prestige being all leaders of prominent martial arts schools it is also very difficult to make a difference in that too. What I suggest is...."

A laughing man said loudly:"Well, why don't all of you give the leading position to my Xiantian Wuji School!"

10 odd men walked slowly towards the platform. Everyone including the dignitaries on the platform were all impressed.

Yu Peiyu was shaking and said to himself softly:"Here they are, here they are...."

These 10 odd men formed to rows and all of them wore green brocades and had long beards. They were at least 50 odd years old.

These 10 odd men were famous top martial arts experts in the realm. Although a lot of people haven't met them but they have all heard of their names.

The Flowered Chestnut Sword Lin Shoujuan, the Dragonking of Taihu, Silver Spear Shen, Ximen Feng of Mount Mao, the

hero of Jiangnan Wang Yuluo, etc.

In spite of the fact that they weren't leaders of any martial arts schools their fame was not inferior to the 13 leaders of the Great Schools.

Abbot Tianyun quickly advanced to greet them: "Welcome everyone! It is indeed an honour to have you here to attend the ceremony. Please take a seat at the first row."

Lin Shoujuan smiled: "We're not here to attend the ceremony."

Wang Yuluo said: "Isn't the Xiantian Wuji School worthy enough anymore to take place on the platform?"

Abbot Tianyun was a bit confused but kept his smile and asked: "Since when did all of you entered the Xiantian Wuji School?"

Lin Shoujuan said: "We haven't invited anyone over that day, please forgive us."

Abbot Tianyun said: "Benefactors,.....your leader, master Yu is he...."

A voice from behind said: "How are you doing, reverend Tianyun? We haven't seen each other for many years."

Abbot Tianyun turned around and saw an elderly, sophisticated man in a long brocade standing on the platform, it was the leader of the Xiantian Wuji School Yu Fanghe.

Nobody saw him walk up the platform.

Abbot Tianyun said: "Brother Yu, I am glad to see you again. I never thought you would enter the realm of martial arts again. But with your arrival I can feel assured now."

In other words abbot Tianyun is supporting Yu Fanghe and the Xiantian Wuji School.

Jueqing Zi and others were not too eager to give in but seeing that Yu Fanghe has managed to enlist a group of top martial arts masters they have no choice but to give in.

Reverend Chuchen said:"If brother Yu would become the new chancellor of Wulin all the Wudang disciples will be very pleased."

Jueqing Zi said:"The entire Kongtong School admires master Yu's reputation and will gladly see master Yu becoming the new chancellor of Wulin."

Ouyang Long loudly said:"My teacher often spoke of master Yu when he was alive. It is a great honour to meet you in person, all the friends of the waters will be very happy to see master Yu lead us."

Madame Hai Tang also said:"Master Yu is famous for his benevolence and righteousness and cannot be compared to mean men who bully innocent women. The Baihua Association fully supports master Yu."

Everyone clapped their hands and approved.

It seems that Yu Fanghe is becoming the next leader for sure. Hong Lianhua is shocked to see this situation and is looking into the crowd hoping to spot Yu Peiyu.

Yu Fanghe smiled:"I'm an old man with no special abilities and am not fit to lead of all the heroes in the realm. However"

Yu Peiyu couldn't control himself anymore and rushed up the platform and called out:"THIS MAN IS NOT MY FATHER! HE IS AN IMPOSTER!"

Lin Shoujuan chided:"Peiyu! Have you gone mad!"

The Dragonking of Taihu and Ximen Feng tried to block Yu but were pushed aside by Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu stood in front of "Yu Fanghe" and shouted:"Who are you? Why do you pretend to be my father?"

During his shout he raised his palm and pushed out towards "Yu Fanghe."

Suddenly he felt a soft, gentle power pushing back and pushed him a few metres back.

Now, Ximen, Shen, and Lin quickly held Yu Peiyu tightly. Abbot Tianyun frowned and said:"This young benefactor is truly too rash."

Reverend Chuchen also said:"Whose disciple is he?"

Yu Peiyu had tears in his eyes and said:"My name is Yu Peiyu."

Abbot Tianyun asked Yu Fanghe:"This young man is your son?"

Yu Fanghe looked up and laughed bitterly:"This boy...he...he..."and sighed.

Now, reverend Chuchen chided Yu Peiyu too:"How can you behave this rudely in front of seniors."

Yu Peiyu couldn't move at all and cried out:"He is not my father! My father is dead! I was there when he died....."

Abbot Tianyun and reverend Chuchen looked at each other and looked confused.

Wang Yuluo sighed:"The poor child has gone insane."

Xie Tianbi nodded and said:"This young man is indeed strange, this morning he accused me of killing his father. But that is impossible I only arrived a few days ago. Fortunately, master Yu has arrived now. This is truly a most unfortunate tragedy...."

Even if there were some people who believed a bit of Yu Peiyu's claim but after hearing this they shook their hands and sighed.

Who will they believe, the words of a group of respected martial arts experts or a rash young man?

This is not even a fair question.

Yu Peiyu saw that everyone was looking at him with compassion and sadness. Nobody believes his story. He was crying now, because who can help him. Will his grievance never be settled?

Lin Shoujuan saw that no one believes Yu Peiyu and he fiercely spoke: "This child has no respects for his father and other seniors. His intentions are wicked and his crimes are unforgivable. Nobody in Wulin can plead for him anymore, I see no other choice but to place righteousness above family loyalty and kill him myself."

Even Yu Peiyu's own future father-in-law cannot tolerate him anymore, so nobody else can speak on behalf of him.

He drew his sword and aimed for Yu Peiyu.

Someone shouted: "Stop right now!"

Lin Shoujuan's hand couldn't move anymore and he saw that Hong Lianhua grabbed his wrist.

He was surprised and asked: "Master Hong Lian, why do you help this unfilial child?"

Hong Lianhua ignored him and tapped Yu Peiyu on the shoulder and laughed: "This joke of yours is a bit too exaggerated but it was very convincing."

Again everyone was stunned, Lin Shoujuan stammered: "Joke...? What joke?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Every time these Wulin gatherings are too serious and lack entertainment. This time I thought of an idea to bring a bit of fun."

Abbot Tianyun, reverend Chuchen and others were all too surprised to talk now.

Hong Lianhua unsealed Yu's acupoints by patting on his back and smiled: "The joke is over now, you can tell the truth."

Yu Peiyu lowered his head and said: "Yes...yes.."

He lifted his head and knelt in front of Yu Fanghe, kowtowed and said: "Please forgive me, father! I was too rude."

Yu Fanghe was looking very pale and said: "You...you... (*cough)...this is too much..."

Hong Lianhua said to Yu Peiyu:"Your father has forgiven you, you can get up now."

Everyone now understood and started to smile and thought it was quite a funny joke.

Only Yu Fanghe, Wang Yuluo and others were fuming.

Xie Tianbi laughingly said:"Brother Hong Lian, I should have guessed you were behind this joke."

Hong Lianhua smiled:"Of course, otherwise who would put an idea in his head to accuse you of being the murderer of his father."

Xian Tianbi laughed loudly.

Yu Fanghe coughed:"This son...he is...(*sigh)."

Besides sighing and coughing what else can he do.

Hong Lianhua helped Yu getting up:"I am the one who put you up to this, I'm sorry that you have to kneel."

Lin Shoujuan sternly said:"Just a minute! The gathering at Lake Huang is a serious matter. How can we allow such nonsense go unpunished. What he did cannot be forgiven because he just knelt down and kowtowed to his father."

Hong Lianhua asked calmly:"What do you suggest Mr. Lin?"

Lin Shoujuan said:"Just for being rude to his seniors is enough to nullify his martial arts and ban him from his school and family."

Hong Lianhua smiled:"Mr. Lin, since when have you become the new chancellor of Wulin?"

Lin Shoujuan was stunned and stuttered:"No, I..."

Hong Lianhua asked again:"Are you the father of brother Peiyu?"

Lin answered:"No, I am not."

Hong Lianhua put up a serious face and said:"In that case, WHO ARE YOU to give orders around on the platform of the gathering at Lake Huang?"

His eyes were very sharp and Lin Shoujuan avoided eye contact with him.

Hong Lianhua looked around and said:"This was my idea! If any of you found this was a bad plan, fine! Punish me or strike me if you please!"

The Beggars Association had existed for more than 800 years now, had thousands of disciples. Hong Lianhua may be young but no one in Wulin would dare to question his martial arts, intelligence, fame. Who would dare to punish him or even to lay a hand on him.

Jueqing Zi was unconcerned about this matter, Madame Hai Tang being a smart woman remained silent.

Yu Xuan smiled:"In my opinion brother Hong Lian just played a harmless joke. Nothing to fuss about we should even thank him and invite him for wine for providing such entertainment."

Hong Lianhua smiled happily and turned to abbot Tianyun:"What do you think, reverend?"

Abbot Tianyun frowned and turned to Yu Fanghe:"Brother Yu should deal with this incident."

Yu Fanghe remained silent for awhile, somebody with a sharp voice called out from the crowd:"Even a tiger won't eat his own cubs!"

It seems that Yu Fanghe's face changed and smiled wryly:"So be it, since master Hong Lian has pleaded on his behalf I will let the matter rest."

Everyone was happy that the incident was solved and cheered.

Hong Lianhua quickly whispered to Mei Simang:"Find out who that person was that shouted."

Mei Simang quietly left the platform and Hong Lianhua thanked Yu Fanghe.

Yu Peiyu looked at Hong Lianhua his eyes were filled with gratitude. He bowed four times to Hong and left the platform. Lin Shoujuan, Ximen Feng and others were looking at Yu Peiyu but couldn't do a thing. All the attending heroes were looking at Yu Peiyu too and smiled.

The young master of the divine sabre softly cursed in his own local dialect, but it was loud enough for Jin Yanzi to hear it.

She coldly said:"He is the son of the new chancellor of Wulin. When it comes to martial arts and prestige he is far and far above you. I advise you not to antagonize him."

The young master of the divine sabre was furious and gritted his teeth.

Yu Peiyu didn't turn around to look at other people. He just wanted to get away from everyone. He was absolutely lost, he didn't know what to do.

There were people everywhere and everyone was pushing each other about. Yu was pushing too, suddenly he felt something prick him in the side. So as result he pushed people aside, with his tremendous strength and his strong internal energy those people all fell on the ground. Some of them called out and cursed, but Yu didn't care anymore. He just wanted to rest.

Finally, he reached a remote desolate place and sat down on a rock.

He felt something dripping from his back, he used his hand to wipe it away. Thinking it was sweat, but when he looked at his hand he saw it wasn't sweat but blood. He now realised that someone tried to kill him in the crowd earlier. Fortunately he pushed out and wanted to get away, otherwise....

He broke out in a cold sweat.

He was so extremely tired and disillusioned about everything.

He pondered about lots of things, about Hong Lianhua's friendship.

About the killer of his father, but now he had to acknowledge an imposter as his father. He was angry and sad.

Thinking back he is surprised how he managed to put a smile on his face. He couldn't hold back his tears anymore, his father was dead, his home was gone, all his relatives and friends have deserted him.

The only thing that kept him going and will keep him going is he wants to find out what is going on here. He cannot give up and will not give up, so he will stay alive no matter what. He got up and started walking.

He heard three people sneaking up on him, Yu Peiyu turned around and saw three shadows quickly hide behind a rock. Yu Peiyu pretended that he didn't notice the three men and walked even slower now. All of a sudden three sabres attacked him from behind. Fast and vicious.

Yu Peiyu stopped and bent forward and used his right leg to kick backwards and heard a scream. One of the attackers was sent flying, the other 2 saw that their attack failed and wanted to run.

Yu Peiyu turned around and used his fist to hit one of the man on the back, the man ran a few steps but suddenly he bent forward and fell to the ground.

The remaining man knew he couldn't escape anymore and turned around to fight. He raised his sabre and wanted to hack Yu, Yu seized his wrist the man wanted to use his fist to strike down Yu. But Yu easily used his other hand to grab the fist.

This man was not a weakling but somehow his martial arts didn't mean a thing anymore around Yu Peiyu.

Yu put force into his both hands and squeezed, the man broke out in a sweat and cried out.

Yu Peiyu sternly asked:"Who sent you? Tell me, and I will let you live."

The man laughed:"You will never know"

The laughing stopped and the man's face turned green.

Yu Peiyu quickly took his pulse but it was too late. In a few moments the man's face changed colour a few times and all the flesh in his face dissolved. Yu Peiyu saw that this poison was similar to the poison that killed Hei Gezi when all the problems started.

He knew that this man was sent by that evil mastermind.

He went over to check on the other 2 attackers and saw that both of them were dead. He sighed and realised he used to much strenth just then.

He lifted his head and stared into the air and sighed, he felt an itch in his hands and started to scratch them.

But the itch seemed to get worse, before long he knew there was something amiss.

He looked at his hands and saw that his fingers were swollen and his palms were black.

The itch and the starting numbness began to spread to his arms too.

He tried to pick the sabre on the ground but his hands didn't listen anymore. With great difficulty he could pick a sabre and wanted to chop off one of his hands.

Suddenly an object flew by and sent the sabre flying.

Two tall figures in long robes came out the bushes, both wore a black cloth covering their face except for their sinister looking eyes.

One was a skinny, tall man, the other was quite muscular.

The skinny man laughed evilly:"Scratch, go ahead! Scratch it will make you feel better."

Yu Peiyu couldn't resist and scratched his hands but in an instant he stopped. He yelled to those 2 men:"In the end I couldn't

escape your vile treachery. Just kill me now!

The skinny man said:"Now, you realise you cannot escape. Weren't you feeling high and mighty just a few moments ago by defeating those three."

The muscular man scoffed:"Those three were sent to die, otherwise why would we sent three useless, expendable fools to deal with you."

The skinny man continued:"We knew that you would investigate their bodies after you've dealt with them. We have sprinkled poisonous powder on their clothes. When you touched them you were poisoned, and with every scratch the poison will travel faster."

The muscular man laughed:"Now both of your hands are too swollen up to fight. Can you still be that arrogant and hit us?"

These two men are putting up a two-man comic show to antagonize Yu Peiyu.

Their plan was devious and ingenious, no matter how careful you are it was practically impossible to escape them.

Yu Peiyu was furious and called out:"Just for your own selfish gain you can even sent your own people to death. What kind of monsters are you!"

The skinny man scoffed:"These 3 men were willing to die for the master and his cause. They died a glorious death. Even their families will feel honoured."

The muscular man said:"But when you die no one will even miss you. They won't even know that you're dead. They will just think that you're touring the world."

Yu Peiyu was feeling very cold now and smiled bitterly:"I never would have dreamt that there was such a vicious

person in this world...."

The poison began to take effect and Yu Peiyu fell down.

The skinny man laughed:"That is the way in the realm of martial arts, I hack at you with my sabre, you stab me with your sword. It is just a matter of who will die first."

The muscular man said:"Amusing, very amusing."

Both of them picked up a sabre and walked to Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I'm about to die, can you at least tell me who this mastermind is."

The skinny man said:"I'm afraid you're destined to become a muddle-headed ghost."

The muscular man continued:"It's not that we do not want to tell you, but the truth is we don't know who the master is either."

Suddenly the muscular man leapt up and called out:"Snake...a snake!"

And he fell to the ground. The skinny man saw a snake biting him and saw 2 snakes coming for him and quickly avoided the snakes. He said to the muscular man:"I will take care of your family. You can die in peace."He used his sabre to hack the muscular man in the face and left.

The muscular man covered in his own blood said with his dying breath:"I feel honoured that I can die for the master and his cause."

Yu Peiyu watched this in amazement but before long he felt dizzy and fainted.

After some time he gradually woke up, the itching was gone but he felt pain and still couldn't move. He was still feeling very woozy in a haze he saw an old man with a white, silver long beard standing in front of him. When he took a closer look he was happy and surprised and said softly:"Mei Sim..."

The old man was Mei Simang of the Beggars Association, he turned to Yu Peiyu and said softly:"Don't move! My little

friends are sucking the poison out of your body."

Yu saw 4 little snakes attached to his body.

Mei Simang was looking at the snakes like a proud parent was admiring his children. He asked with a smile: "Aren't they cute?" After being almost killed by 2 ruthless men and one devious plot, these snakes seem indeed very cute.

Yu Peiyu managed to smile a bit, this was the first time in a long, long time he felt a bit relaxed.

He was thinking that perhaps Mei Simang might know the identity of the attackers. Because judging from the martial arts of the 2 men they must be famous martial artists. And Mei Simang being a knowledgeable Wulin senior might recognize them.

Mei Simang saw the pensive face of Yu and knew what he was thinking and sighed: "It could be that I know this man but unfortunately the other man deliberately mutilated his face, so that we cannot trace the identity of this man. Such viciousness is seldom seen."

Yu Peiyu closed his eyes and sighed this lead has also ended.

Mei Simang continued: "I carefully examined, searched the clothers of these men but couldn't find a clue that would reveal their identities. They're not only cunning but also very cautious."

He looked at the hand of Yu Peiyu and nodded. He whistled softly and the snakes let go and crawled back to him. Mei Simang softly said: "Good job! You can rest now."

The snakes seemed to understand him and crawled back into a sack.

Mei Simang said: "Luckily the poison didn't enter your body via a wound otherwise there might be some problems. Now you just need a good rest."

Yu Peiyu wanted to say thanks but knew that a mere [thanks] would not repay the kindness of Mei Simang and would probably insult him too. Also Mei Simang seemed very happy to help.

Mei Simang continued:"I don't know if the gathering has finished, if the gathering is over master Hong Lian wishes to speak to you."

Yu Peiyu said:"I won't go."

Mei Simang asked:"Why?" Yu Peiyu said:"I don't want to drag the Beggars Association into my family problems."

Mei Simang smiled lightly and said:"Master Hong Lian is not the sort of man who is afraid for a bit of trouble."

Yu Peiyu sighed and followed Mei Simang.

Mei Simang said:"I think I heard cheers earlier, I suppose the ceremony is over and the new chancellor of Wulin is installed. With this the peace in Wulin is secured."

Yu Peiyu asked bitterly:"Is it really secured?"

Mei Simang sighed:"I hope it will be."

The feast to celebrate the new leader of Wulin Yu Fanghe has started.

Before long they reached the tent of Hong Lianhua. There was no one near the tent, a voice inside asked:"Who is there?" The voice was deep and powerful, Yu Peiyu was startled and then he heard Hong Lianhua asking:"Has father Mei returned? Did you bring back our lost little sheep?"

Both of them entered, Yu Peiyu saw an elderly majestic looking Taoist priest sitting next to Hong Lianhua. The old Taoist priest sat very straight and examined Yu Peiyu with his pair of shining eyes.

Yu Peiyu lowered his head, the grandeur of that old Taoist priest was incredible.

Hong Lianhua laughed:"You're finally here. Do you recognize this reverend?"

Yu Peiyu said:"The leader of the Kunlun School?"

Hong Lianhua clapped his hands and praised:"Very good! Reverend Tiangang didn't say a word when you entered and yet you were able to recognize him."

Hong Lianhua turned to Mei Simang and asked:"What kind of poison did those men use? And who were they?"

Mei Simang lowered his head and replied:"The identities of those men are unknown and I don't recognize the poison however..."

While he was relating what happened, reverend Tiangang got up and advanced to Yu Peiyu with lightning speed and used his index finger to seal 12 major acupoints of Yu's arms and put a pill in Yu's mouth. He said to Yu Peiyu:"Don't move for the next hour."

Without saying anything else Yu swallowed the pill and reverend Tiangang returned to his seat with the same speed.

Yu Peiyu was also very surprised now and remained silent. Mei Simang lowered his head even deeper and said:"I...I thought.."

Hong Lianhua sighed:"You thought you had removed the poison from brother Peiyu's body?"

Mei Simang said:"I saw that..."

Hong Lianhua explained:"If it wasn't for reverend Tiangang's Diamond Finger and Gold Dissolving Pill the arms of brother Peiyu were lost."

Yu Peiyu was shocked and Mei Simang looked ashamed.

Hong Lianhua asked:"Earlier I asked to see who that person was that shouted something to Yu Fanghe. Did you find something about that person?"

Mei Simang replied:"I asked several people, but no one paid any attention that that person. They only knew that he wore a black robe."

Hong Lianhua frowned and said:"A black robe..."

Of all the attending Wulin people at the gathering almost half the people present wore something black.

Hong Lianhua turned to reverend Tiangang and asked:"What do you think, reverend?"

Reverend Tiangang answered:"A unknown poison, unknown assassins, a devious plot with no flaws."

Hong Lianhua asked:"Could that mysterious black-robed man belong to the Xiantian Wuji School?"

Reverend Tiangang replied:"Even if he isn't a disciple he must have links to the school."

Hong Lianhua sighed:"If you say that Yu Fanghe, Wang Yuluo, Lin Shoujuan and other prominent Wulin heroes were behind this evil plot. Nobody will believe it. Their chivalrous and benevolent deeds over these 20 years are not fake. But if we say that they do not have anything to do with this conspiracy, that doesn't make sense either."

Yu Peiyu said:"Their fame is real, but these men are imposters."

Hong Lianhua smiled bitterly:"I carefully examined their faces and movements. They are not wearing a mask or a disguise. Also if they were no one can be that accurate in acting the manners of someone else. Furthermore if they were disguised and wearing masks how could they fool abbot Tianyun and reverend Chuchen and others who are befriended with them for many years."

Yu Peiyu lowered his head, forgetting about the other people like Lin Shoujuan, Wang Yuluo, etc.

But just his father, the man that impersonates his father is so lifelike. If Yu Peiyu didn't see his real father die he would surely believe that this Yu Fanghe is his father. But who can this be?

Mei Simang said:"Could it be that these people were hypnotized and are under the control of someone else? I

could remember that many years ago something similar happened in Wulin."

Hong Lianhua said:"No, hypnotized men behave differently, very artificial. But these men behave very naturally and don't seem to be hypnotized."

Reverend Tiangang sighed deeply:"A very cunning plan with no flaws."

Hong Lianhua said:"If we say that these men were imposters they seem to real. But if they are not imposters their actions are very questionable. Whether they are following orders from someone else or following their own secret dark agenda, at this moment they have successfully become the leaders of Wulin. This is something which brings a lot of concern and besides the four of us everyone believes their intentions are pure and good."

He added with a wry smile:"This must be the most deadly and masterful plan of the entire history of Wulin."

Reverend Tiangang put up an even more serious face than usual and said:"Young master Yu is our only chance in foiling their plans."

Hong Lianhua sighed:"Because of this his life is in peril. If anything happens to him..."

Mei Simang asked:"But this Yu Fanghe has acknowledged that young master Yu is his son, how can he kill him anymore?"

Hong Lianhua said:"Although he cannot kill young master Yu openly, he could have him assassinated and look like if it was an accident. And accidents do happen and no one has to take any responsibility for an accident."

Mei Simang said:"That explains why nobody tried to ambush young master Yu earlier, when I was trying to cure him. They were afraid there might be witnesses."

Hong Lianhua said:"It will be very difficult for him to leave this place on his own. We have to..."

Reverend Tiangang interrupted Hong Lianhua: "Do you know what the worst thing is that could happen right now?"

Hong Lianhua frowned and asked: "Reverend, have you thought of something?"

Reverend Tiangang said: "If this would happen, young master Yu would surely die."

Suddenly someone outside called out very loudly: "Is reverend Tiangang here? Chancellor Yu would like to speak to you."

Reverend Tiangang's face changed and said: "I will be back in awhile." He got up and walked outside.

Hong Lianhua looked even more worried now and said: "Reverend Tiangang must have thought of something important. What could he have thought of?"

Mei Simang softly said: "What a frightening plot! At this point things are dangerous already, could it get any worse? Young master Yu is really in a lot of trouble..."

Yu Peiyu smiled tragically: "I know that I am pushed into the corner of death, even if I won't die I will probably go mad. But anyhow I'm grateful to the people who believe and helped me till the day I die."

Hong Lianhua shook his head and didn't know what to say.

Yu Peiyu said: "I don't know how to thank you, master Hong Lian. Everyone thinks I'm a madman but why do you believe me?"

Hong Lianhua said: "There is a reason...."

He took out a beautifully embroidered pouch out of his robe and opened it. Inside was an old piece of paper. He handed the paper to Yu and said: "Read it and you'll understand."

It was quite strange that this piece of old paper would be kept in such a beautifully embroidered pouch.

On the piece of paper were only a few character namely: Believe in Yu Peiyu and help Yu Peiyu.

It seemed those characters were scribbled down in a hurry.
Yu Peiyu showed Mei Simang the short letter.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Who wrote this letter?"

Hong Lianhua said with a strange sad look on his face:"Your fiancée."

Yu Peiyu was too surprised to see the sad strange look on Hong Lianhua's face and exclaimed:"Lin Daiyu? Do you know her?"

Hong Lianhua nodded:"3 days ago I met her near Shangqiu, she was with her father, Lin Shoujuan and Wang Yuluo. I have known her for a long time but that day she seemed not to recognize me anymore."

Yu Peiyu asked:"You have known each other for a long time?"

Hong Lianhua smiled a bit:"You don't leave your home a lot, do you? That's why you don't have many names in Wulin. Lin Daiyu has been roaming Wulin since the age of 13 and every year she quietly leaves her home and has done some rather chivalrous deeds in all these years. And has become quite famous."

Yu Peiyu remembered her strong personality, her good swordsmanship and sighed:"She is very different from me, she is much stronger."

Hong Lianhua said: "She used to be a very open and straightforward girl but that day she seemed different and I began to suspect something was wrong. Anyway I ordered the disciples of Shangqiu to talk to the innkeeper of the inn she was staying at. A disciple disguised himself as one of the waiters and she saw through the disguise and handed that disciple this pouch with the letter."

Mei Simang exclaimed:"No wonder that day Old Song Si hurriedly came to see you, master. He seemed to have urgent news."

Yu Peiyu was silent for awhile and said softly:"She is used to roaming Wulin, she wasn't at home when something

happened at her house."

Hong Lianhua's face changed and asked:"Something happened at her house too, so this Lin Shoujuan is also..."

Yu Peiyu nodded:"This Lin Shoujuan is also an imposter, but that day...(sigh*)"

He remembered when Lin Daiyu told him what happened and said:"I thought she was also in cahoots with that evil mastermind. She knew then that this was a horrible big conspiracy and she played along with those imposters to avoid suspicion. After all this time now I realise she and I are walking the same path. She is 10 times more intelligent than I."

Hong Lianhua agreed:"Of all the men and women I met, she is the most intelligent one I have ever seen."

Yu Peiyu said:"But that Lin Shoujuan is an imposter why doesn't he kill her? Judging from the situation she must be detained by them. I'm afraid....."

Chapter 3 : Sinister and Ruthless

Yu Peiyu couldn't help panting and his legs felt tired, his head was feeling woozy. Luckily Reverend Tiangang stopped in front of a abandoned temple. He looked at Yu Peiyu and shook his head:"Peiyu, you're still not strong enough to endure hardships. Let us rest inside."

Yu Peiyu saw the statue of the local god and saw his face was looking very sinister and had a mysterious grin.

Hong Lianhua assured Yu Peiyu by saying:"An intelligent and strong girl like her is very capable of taking care of herself. Don't worry about her, she will be fine."

Hong Lianhua put the letter back into the pouch, Yu Peiyu thought he was going to give the pouch to him. But Hong Lianhua carefully put the pouch back into his robe.

Yu Peiyu said:"If we could get in touch with her, we will certainly..."

At this moment reverend Tiangang entered and sighed:"Another difficult issue is at hand."

Mei Simang asked with a shock:"What kind of trouble do we have now?"

Reverend Tiangang said:"That Yu Fang...he asked me to become the counsellor of Wulin."

Yu Peiyu said in surprise:"Counsellor?"

Hong Lianhua explained:"Besides electing a new chancellor it is the custom to appoint a counsellor. The counsellor is the second in command, in the previous years Shaolin took the leading position and Wudang became the counsellor."

Reverend Tiangang said:"If Yu F...appoints reverend Chuchen of Wudang, it would be difficult for them to carry out their secret agenda. But I live on Mount Kunlun in the western

regions therefore makes it difficult for me to question their activities."

Hong Lianhua said with a smile: "Reverend, also your excellent reputation has something to do with it. They could have asked that Iron Overlord. But what was it earlier that you wanted to discuss?"

Reverend Tiangang said: "The thing that worries me most is that this Yu person would demand that young master Yu would go back with him. What should we do about that?"

Hong Lianhua exclaimed: "You're right,....."

Reverend Tiangang continued: "If young master Yu returns to them, he could be ambushed at any time. But when a father demands that his son goes back with him we cannot say no to him, can we."

Hong Lianhua looked very worried and said over and over again: "What can we do? What can we do?"

Mei Simang said: "Young master Yu must run as soon as possible."

Reverend Tiangang shook his head, Mei asked: "If he cannot run what other option is left."

Reverend Tiangang said: "Young master Yu must find a new teacher. When a teacher wants his new disciple to go with him, and learn new martial arts not even a father can say no."

Mei Simang clapped his hands and said: "A good plan!"

Hong Lianhua smiled: "Congratulations brother Peiyu for finding an excellent teacher! Congratulations reverend Tiangang for accepting a brilliant disciple!"

Yu Peiyu was stunned and reverend Tiangang said: "I am not fit to become young master Yu's teacher."

Hong Lianhua interrupted with a smile: "Reverend, if you're not fit in becoming the teacher of young master Yu no one is. Besides this matter concerns the lives of hundreds perhaps

thousands Wulin people. Reverend, you must accept young master Yu as your student."

Yu Peiyu knelt down and suddenly a voice outside called out loudly:"Is young master Yu here? Chancellor Yu wishes to talk to you."

Hong Lianhua looked at Yu Peiyu and sighed:"It seems everywhere you go they are watching you."

Mei Simang broke out in a cold sweat.

They walked outside and saw everyone was enjoying the feast. Yu Peiyu felt sad and useless, his life was in the hands of others and he felt like a puppet.

A man in a black robe walked up and said:"Chancellor Yu is in the tent of abbot Tianyun."

They arrived outside the tent of abbot Tianyun. Abbot Tianyun spoke:"Is master Hong Lian here as well?"

Hong Lianhua laughed:"Abbot Tianyun's cultivation is very high, could it be that you have mastered divine abilities?"

Reverend Tiangang entered the tent too.

Yu Fanghe sat next to abbot Tianyun drinking tea, Lin Shoujuan, the Dragon king of Taihu etc. were not present.

Yu Fanghe sat there very tranquil and said:"Peiyu, are you feeling well?"

Yu Peiyu bowed and said:"Father, I'm feeling fine."

Yu Fanghe said:"You have never left home before in your life. From now on everything you should behave correctly. You should listen to the teachings of seniors."

Yu Peiyu replied:"Yes, I will."

One of them was pretending to be a caring father the other was trying his best to look like a filial son.

Yu Peiyu knew that this man was his enemy but still put a very respectful and obedient look.

That Yu Fanghe also knew that this young man

wasn't his son. And nothing would make him more happy as to kick him dead right now. But he put up his facade as a caring loving father.

Hong Lianhua who was watching this entire scene was very much amused.

He knew that it was practically impossible to imagine how difficult it was for these 2 men to act as nothing has happened while in fact everything is different.

Abbot Tianyun smiled: "Young benefactor Yu is a very intelligent handsome young man. I am sure that later on his abilities and prospects will not be beneath you, benefactor Yu."

Hong Lianhua happily said: "I'm happy to inform chancellor Yu that young master Yu has not only an excellent father but also a good teacher."

Yu Fanghe said in surprise: "A good teacher?"

Reverend Tiangang smiled: "I saw that your son is a very intelligent young man with a remarkable talent for martial arts. Therefore I couldn't resist to accepting Peiyu as my disciple, I hope chancellor Yu can forgive me."

Hong Lianhua said: "Wonderful, not only will young master Yu have mastered the martial arts of Xiantian Wuji School but also the martial arts of Kunlun. Young master Yu will certainly become a worthy hero fit to carry the name Yu. Don't you think so, chancellor Yu?"

Yu Fanghe said: "(*cough)....Thank you, reverend Tiangang."

Although Yu Fanghe was smiling but everyone could see that this smile was not very natural and certainly not a happy smile.

Reverend Tiangang said: "Tomorrow morning I will return to Mount Kunlun, Peiyu..."

Hong Lianhua quickly said: "Of course young master Yu will go with his teacher. Chancellor Yu, don't be worried, the

special skills of Kunlun are known far and wide. If young master Yu can study those skills as soon as possible it will be a good thing. Also chancellor Yu has to lead Wulin now and must have so many formalities to take care of."

He held Yu Peiyu's arm and said:"From now on you will have to train very hard. No more relaxing for you! I think the next time we will see each other will be at least 3 years later. When that happens we will drink to a heart's contend."

Hong pulled Yu outside very quickly, Yu Fanghe was bemused with this situation.

Abbot Tianyun laughed:"Your son is very fortunate to have a good friend like master Hong Lian."

Yu Fanghe smiled dryly:"Yes, indeed very fortunate."

The next morning all the faces of the heroes looked very red as result of yesterday's drinking.

No matter how drunk the Kunlun disciples are they had to compose themselves. They had to see their leader off.

Inside the tent Yu Peiyu kowtowed to Yu Fanghe, then 8 purple-robed young Taoist priests saw reverend Tiangang and Yu Peiyu off.

Hong Lianhua held Yu Peiyu's hand and said:"Take care of yourself. Don't forget me!"

Yu Peiyu said with a trembling voice:"I...I"

And was very touched.

Suddenly someone said loudly:"Peiyu, I think you won't see Daiyu for a long time. Why don't you see her one more time."

Yu Peiyu turned around and saw Lin Shoujuan and Lin Daiyu.

Yu Peiyu stared into her beautiful eyes and was captivated by her beauty. She stared back to and forgot everything around her.

Hong Lianhua looked at them and just stood there.

Reverend Tiangang suddenly said:"The time on the mountains will pass slowly with loneliness. Love and emotion are not meant to last. Let us go!"

Lin Daiyu watched them go and her ever so strong and cool eyes were filled with tears.

A tenderly voice laughed:"Seeing your fiance gone must make you feel lonely, right?"

Lin Daiyu could smell a very sweet and strong flower fragrance and wanted to turn around.

But Wang Yuluo and Ximen Feng coldly told Lin Daiyu:"Daiyu, let's go."

The sweet voice said:"Women amongst each other have a lot of things to say."

Wang Yuluo said:"Xiantian Wuji School and Baihua Association have no close relations."

Lin Daiyu now saw a beautiful woman in front of her, the figure was the ever so charming leader of the Baihua Association Madame Hai Tang.

Ximen Feng and Wang Yuluo wanted to intervene between Lin and Madame Hai Tang. But Madame Hai Tang gently waved her hands and a thin fog rose up and Ximen and Wang paced back one step and saw that Madame Hai Tang pulled Lin Daiyu away.

She smiled to Lin Shoujuan:"The Flowered Chestnut Sword, you won't mind if I take your daughter away for a few days. Just like men when I see a pretty girl I just want to chat to her for days."

Lin Shoujuan didn't know what to say and was totally lost.

Hong Lianhua was secretly laughing when he saw this.

The 14 flag-poles stood there and the banners defied the wind as usual.

The gathering of Lake Huang every 7 years has now become overblown blossoms. All the heroes gradually left. Seeing

that some of the seniors of Wulin are now old and weak, they young ones are showing their ambition. Will the older generation feel melancholic?

Someone sang a tragic song:" Within 7 years,
how many heroes have turned old?

The ambition of Wulin, will it belong to their old dreams...."

Hong Lianhua looked up and saw the banner of the Xiantian Wuji School and heard that tragic song and sighed:" Everything till the end will end like a dream.
Ceased! Ceased!

The overblown blossoms, the flowered butterfly..."

Someone said:" You cannot cease! If you stop who will continue?"

The speaker was Xie Tianbi, the leader of Diancang School.

Hong Lianhua laughed:" Brother Xie is a young hero, how can you understand the melancholy of the famous Song poet Su Dongpo."

Xie Tianbi smiled:" Although I don't understand much about poetry I am still capable of understanding the poems of Su Dongpo. But you have just begun with your work in Wulin and the Beggars Association why the melancholy?"

Hong Lianhua smiled lightly:" Not even heroes can resist the pain of parting. But who is capable of resisting that pain."

Xie Tianbi asked:" Has your new friend, young master Yu left? With reverend Tiangang?"

Hong Lianhua said:" Yes! For some time now."

Xie Tianbi's face changed and stamped his foot and said:" Why did he leave this early?"

Hong Lianhua was surprised by his look and asked:" Early? What do you mean with that?"

Xie said with a gloomy face:" Forgive me, master Hong Lian. I am too late."

Hong Lianhua quickly held his arms and asked:"What are you talking aboutt?"

Xie Tianbi asked:"Have you ever heard of The Wanderer of the Corners of the World?"

Hong Lianhua said:"Of course I have heard of him. He is a mysterious wandering hero and even reverend Chuchen of Wudang once openly praised his chivalry."

Xie Tianbi said:"I just received a carrier pigeon from him with an important message."

Hong Lianhua asked with anxiety:"What?...What is the message, quickly?"

Xie Tianbi sighed deeply and closed his eyes and said:"The Wanderer wrote that the leader of the Kunlun School, reverend Tiangang passed away half a month ago."

Hong Lianhua cried out with shock:"NO!!!!!"

Hong Lianhua asked again with a trembling voice:"Are you certain your information is correct?"

Xie Tianbi said:"The Wanderer used more than 10 days to look for the truth and when he actually saw the body of reverend Tiangang he sent a carrier pigeon to inform me as soon as possible."

Hong Lianhua was shaking:"In other words this reverend Tiangang is an imposter too?"

Xie Tianbi sighed deeply:"When I saw that he didn't say a word on the platform I was a bit suspicious and when he became the counsellor. I was...."

Hong Lianhua interrupted him:"Why didn't you tell me earlier?"

Xie Tianbi said:"I wasn't sure at that time."

Hong Lianhua said:"Now I have sent Yu Peiyu right in the hands of the enemy. Damn it! Out of the frying-pan into the fire."

Xie Tianbi:"That's why I rushed over here after immediately receiving the news."

Hong Lianhua broke out in a cold sweat and stammered:"That's why he left his disciples here and only took Yu Peiyu with him. It...it will make it easier for them to kill him. It is my fault!"

Xie Tianbi said:"Everything was planned with the upmost precision. Otherwise the Kunlun School has very strict rules aboutt accepting new disciples, how come this reverend Tiangang can accept a new disciple that easily? I'm afraid..."

Hong Lianhua laughed sadly:"What a flawless, evil plan! You cannot defend and protect yourself against it..."

He turned to Xie Tianbi and said:"Thank you for telling me! Perhaps it is not too late."

Xie Tianbi asked:"Aren't they gone for some time now?"

Hong Lianhua said:"With our speed we can certainly catch up with them."

Xie Tianbi said angrily:"We needn't uphold any Wulin rules against evil,vile men like them. When we see him we might as well play along for a minute and see what his intentions are first."

Hong Lianhua agreed:"You're right! Let us go!"

The fog was getting thicker, Yu Peiyu was walking behind reverend Tiangang. He was looking at the long beard and the grand posture of reverend Tiangang.

He was thinking aboutt everything that happened these past days. Not knowing whether to feel sad or happy aboutt his current situation. The Kunlun School is renowned in the world, becoming a Kunlun disciple is a very difficult thing.

The rules and regulations are very strict, but without his unfortunate encounters he wouldn't have become the disciple of reverend Tiangang.

Reverend Tiangang said:" We have to travel a long way, we must make haste."

Yu Peiyu replied:" Yes, master."

Reverend Tiangang said:" Kunlun has very strict rules and requires a very high discipline. Are you ready for that?"

Yu Peiyu said:" Master, I'm not afraid of hardship."

Reverend Tiangang said:" You're my youngest disciple after we return you'll have to do many tasks. You look too gentle and frail. I wonder whether you can stand it."

Yu Peiyu said:" Master, at home I had to do lots of hard jobs. I'm not afraid for any kinds of hardships."

Reverend Tiangang said:" Very good, up ahead is a well. Get some water!"

Yu Peiyu answered:" Yes, master."

Farther up ahead was indeed a well. He lowered the bucket to get some water. The surroundings here reminded him of his home, courtyard and his father. His tranquil, benevolent smile.

He couldn't stop his tears from rolling anymore, he used his sleeve to wipe them away. Unfortunately he lost his grip and the bucket fell into the well again. He tried to grab it but slipped and fell into the well.

It was impossible to climb out of it even with his superior martial arts. But the strange thing was he started to learning martial arts at a very young his footwork was very stable.

The water was very cold and Yu Peiyu tried his best to climb but with no luck. Every time he slips because of the slimy walls. But why didn't reverend Tiangang save him after all this time?

He didn't cry out for help and at some point he heard the galloping sound of a horse. Suddenly a girl asked:"Who has fallen into the well? Is it.....could it be...Yu.....?"

Reverend Tiangang said:"Yes, it is Yu Peiyu."

The girl asked:"Reverend, you saw him fall into the well. Why won't you save him? Do you want him to die?"

Reverend Tiangang said seriously:"He said that he was ready to face all kinds of hardship. But he doesn't understand that many trials in life come unexpectedly. I want to condition him now so he will be prepared for the trials to come."

The girl said:"Reverend, please forgive me for being rude. But I think he has suffered enough now."

Reverend Tiangang smiled:"Benefactress, why are you this concerned?"

The girl didn't say a word for some time, she seems to have difficulty answering that question. In the end she said loudly:"I followed you here because I wanted to say something to....him."

Reverend Tiangang said:"In that case, I will help him get out now."

He lowered a long rope into the well and Yu Peiyu climbed the rope to get out. His clothes were wet, his face turned red from embarrassment and didn't dare to raise his head.

The girl handed him a silk handkerchief with her beautiful white hand and said with a tender voice:"Wipe away the water on your face."

Yu Peiyu lowered his head even lower now because he heard that this simple sentence was filled with care and love. He didn't know whether he should accept the handkerchief or not.

Reverend Tiangang loudly said:" Raise your head like a true man!"

Yu raised his head and saw Jin Yanzi, this straightforward girl was looking at him with care and tenderness.

Reverend Tiangang said:"Benefactress, you can tell him what you wished to say. But please hurry we have a long

way ahead of us."

This stern old Taoist priest saw that this matter had to do with love and stroked his beard and gave the 2 of them privacy.

Jin Yanzi smiled lovingly and said:"Take the handkerchief."

Yu Peiyu couldn't tell anymore if the liquid on his face was water or sweat and stammered:"Thank you, Miss."

Jin Yanzi said:"You must be surprised, why I followed you here?"

Yu Peiyu was drying his face and said:"What can I do for you, Miss?"

Jin Yanzi sighed:"I don't know but ever since I met you I just couldn't bear to part with you. So I followed you here. Whenever I want something I just act on my feelings and do it."

Yu Peiyu stuttered:"I....Miss...."

In the distance he saw another horse and somebody standing next to the horse.

Yu Peiyu coughed:"Miss, I understand your feelings. However the young master of the divine sabre is standing there waiting for you. Miss, I think it is best that you..."

Jin Yanzi interrupted him with a cold laugh:"Don't mind him. He can wait as long as he wants to. Why worry aboutt him."

After saying this her voice became tenderly again:"I just want to ask you, do you want to see me again in the future?"

Yu Peiyu was stuttering again:"I....I...."

Jin Yanzi bit her lip and said:"I'm a girl and I am bold enough to tell you my intentions. Why don't you speak?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I'm an unfortunate man, I think it is best that we won't see each other anymore."

Jin Yanzi was shocked and stood there for some time and said with a trembling voice:"Fine,.....good!"

She mounted her horse and rode off.

Yu Peiyu stood there holding her handkerchief and saw her off with his eyes. Feeling melancholic, all of a sudden a horse rode towards him and a sabre hacked at him.

The horse was as fast as a touring dragon and the sabre was swift as the wind. Judging by that hack the wielder is fit enough to be called a top martial artist.

Yu Peiyu couldn't leap away so instead he rushed forward. He felt the sabre passing by his back.

The young master of the divine sabre laughed arrogantly: "This hack is only a small warning. The next time if you're in the way I will chop off your head."

Yu Peiyu was bemused by this entire incident and saw that his robe was cut open by the sabre. Just another centimetre he was dead.

Reverend Tiangang sighed: "These love tribulations are very troublesome, I hope you can cope with them."

Yu Peiyu said: "I.....I..."

Reverend Tiangang said with an earnest face: "Don't say a thing! Let us go."

Reverend Tiangang walked with a normal pace but Yu Peiyu had difficulty catching up. The past events of these few days have taken its toll on his energy and also his wet clothes were not making it any easier for him to travel. But he didn't say a word in front of his strict teacher.

The fog was gone but it was still very clouded much like the face of reverend Tiangang. The dried clothes of Yu Peiyu were wet again by sweat.

Yu Peiyu couldn't help panting and his legs felt tired, his head was feeling woozy.

Luckily reverend Tiangang stopped in front of a abandoned temple. He looked at Yu Peiyu and shook his head: "Peiyu,

you're still not strong enough to endure hardships. Let us rest inside."

Yu Peiyu saw the statue of the local god and saw his face was looking very sinister and had a mysterious grin.

Yu Peiyu couldn't stand it anymore and lay down in front of the shrine.

Reverend Tiangang said:"Get up! Don't lie in front of the shrine."

Yu Peiyu got up but didn't resent his teacher. He felt that only a strict teacher can produce extraordinary disciples.

Reverend Tiangang continued:"All the Kunlun disciples have to endure hardships. Especially you, you have many trials in front of you that is why you have to prepare yourself for them."

Yu Peiyu said:"I understand, master."

Reverend Tiangang was looking outside and saw the leaves were blown off by the wind. This world famous Kunlun leader was captivated by the arrival of Autumn and said softly:"It is aboutt to rain again....Heaven is so unpredictable, but life is unpredictable too. Child, remember this. You can never rely fully on anyone, you can only rely on yourself."

The wind started to blow harder and Yu Peiyu shivered now. This sudden change of weather could be a sign of a bad omen.

Reverend Tiangang said:"Peiyu, come here."

Yu Peiyu walked over to his teacher. Reverend Tiangang took out a rice cake out of his sack and handed it to Yu Peiyu.

With a seldom seen warm smile he said:"Eat up, child. When I was your age I got hungry particular easy too."

His ever so strict teacher showed his affection towards him. Yu Peiyu held the rice cake and wept and said:"What aboutt you, master?"

Reverend Tiangang smiled:"This rice cake is very special, not everyone can eat it. After you have taken it you will understand."

Somebody outside laughed:"Since this rice cake is so special I would like to taste it too."

The speaker walked inside, he was panting and there was something funny about his laugh.

Yu Peiyu said happily:"Master Hong Lian, why are you here?"

Reverend Tiangang stroked his long beard and smiled:"I don't think you have rushed over for this rice cake."

Hong Lianhua said with a laugh:"Reverend, you're very sharp. But I do have something to show you."

He took out an object out of his robe and presented it in front of reverend Tiangang.

The object was very small and because it was dark no one could see clearly what it was.

Reverend Tiangang bent over to take a closer look and smiled:"Whatever it is, it must be very special since master Hong Lian...."

Before he could finish Hong Lianhua used his hand to smack up and hit reverend Tiangang on the eyes. Suddenly a flash of lightning brightened the temple and a sword pierced through reverend Tiangang's back.

He called out and struck out a palm. Hong Lianhua made a somersault in the air and landed 2 metres away.

The force of that palm destroyed the shrine and the statue came crackling down.

Reverend Tiangang fell to the ground and blood oozed out of his wound. He asked with his dying breath:"Why....you....you...!"

But he was dead before he could finish.

Yu Peiyu was too surprised to react and the rice cake fell out of his hands. Hong Lianhua was backed against a wall and was panting heavily also the colour of his face was a bit strange.

However, he wasn't too late Yu Peiyu was still alive.

Xie Tianbi appeared too and exclaimed:"Fortunately, we were not too late."

Hong Lianhua sighed:"You should not have killed him, we could have interrogated him."

Xie Tianbi said:"What is there to interrogate? Furthermore,...."

Yu Peiyu shouted:"What are you doing? Why did you kill my master!"

Xie Tianbi said:"If we didn't kill him, he would have killed you!"

Yu Peiyu said with a shock:"WHAT!"

Xie Tianbi said:"You will understand later on."

He held on to Yu Peiyu's arm and said to Hong Lianhua:"The conspirators must have henchmen around to rendezvous with this imposter. I will bring young master Yu to a safe location and will return to help you."

He pulled Yu outside and the 2 of them quickly left. Yu Peiyu was too flabbergasted to say anything now and just walked along.

Hong Lianhua stood at the door of the temple and said softly:"Bring it on."

He pulled out the sword out of reverend Tiangang's back, there was another flash of lightning. The blood dripped of the sword and Hong Lianhua saw something. All of a sudden he began to shake and coughed up blood.

Xie Tianbi explained to Yu Peiyu:"This reverend Tiangang is a fake too. They want to take your life and if you had eaten that rice cake, you would be dead now."

Yu Peiyu was shocked and exclaimed:"Really?"

Xie Tianbi said:"If you don't believe me, fine. But you mustn't doubt the intentions of master Hong Lian."

Yu Peiyu said:"But....but, he....he.."

He remembered the incident with the well, could it be that reverend Tiangang really wanted to harm him? But the grandeur he had, that couldn't be faked, or could it?

He was really confused and was pulled by Xie Tianbi. Suddenly he felt the hand of Xie Tianbi was very cold. Extremely cold.....

Yu Peiyu shivered and said:"There is something strange aboutt your hand."

Xie Tianbi turned around and smiled:"What are you talking aboutt?"

Yu Peiyu watched him and replied:"I mean, I mean you look like...."

Suddenly he yelled:"You are the imposter, your eyes..."

Xie Tianbi quickly sealed the 3 acupoints on Yu's palm. And he flung Yu over his head.

Xie Tianbi laughed evilly:"You're very smart. But smart people die quicker."

He wanted to used his foot to step on Yu Peiyu's chest, Yu couldn't move anymore. But he could use his left hand to grab his foot.

Xie Tianbi scoffed and used more force into his foot.

Yu Peiyu couldn't stop his foot and said angrily:"You're the one that killed my father. I have looked everywhere for you."

Xie Tianbi laughed:"Now you have found me. What do you want to do? Your father died at my hands and now you will die at my foot. HAHAAAAHA!"

Yu Peiyu couldn't block his foot any longer also he kept hearing Xie Tianbi laughing.

Finally, he coughed his blood on Xie Tianbi's robe.

Suddenly Xie Tianbi heard a sound and saw a sword flying towards him. He leapt up and with a somersault he landed a few metres away.

He saw a person floating towards him, looking very angry and his eyes were set to kill.

The sword pierced through a tree and was stuck there. Hong Lianhua threw the sword with everything he had.

Xie Tianbi's face changed and with difficulty put a smile on his face and asked: "Master Hong Lian, have you defeated the henchmen so soon?"

Hong Lianhua stared at him with his bright eyes and said slowly: "Who are you?"

Xie Tianbi raised his head and laughed: "Me?...Who I am?...Brother Hong Lian, don't you recognize me anymore?"

His laughter sounded worse than any form of crying.

Hong Lianhua walked up and said again slowly: "I ask you again: Who are you?"

Xie Tianbi backed a few paces and said: "I...brother..."

Hong Lianhua said coldly: "You look like the real Xie Tianbi, too lifelike even. I would like to slice off your flesh bit by bit. I want to see how it is possible to impersonate my friend Xie Tianbi."

Hong Lianhua said these words with calmness and coldness, it had more effect than cursing these words.

Indeed, Xie Tianbi shivered when he heard that threat. And laughed arrogantly: "Good, Hong Lianhua! I never thought you would see through my disguise. I used 3 years to study Xie Tianbi and finally after 3 years of hard work I succeeded. Not even himself would be able to tell the difference. What gave me away?"

Hong Lianhua said: "That sword! The leader of Diancang would never use that kind of sword. And you should

remember the following, Diancang disciples don't casually throw or leave their swords behind.

If the sword is present, so is the wielder. If the wielder is dead, the sword will be lost."

Hong Lianhua was stunned and regretfully said:"Yes, of course. I have totally forgotten aboutt that. Hong Lianhua, you are very sharp. No wonder my master told me that you're a very difficult person to deal with."

Hong Lianhua made a fist and asked:"Who is your master?"

Xie Tianbi arrogantly laughed:"You will never know, and when you do find out you will die! Even people thousand times superior to you have died at the master's hands."

Hong Lianhua laughed tragically:"You're right in the entire analects of Wulin nobody can matches his vile and despicable plans."

Xie Tianbi said loudly:"Wulin will fall under his rule. Hong Lianhua, you are a smart man. Think carefully and you will know what to do."

Hong Lianhua walked a few paces towards him and said:"I want to kill you. At this moment I just want to kill you."

Xie Tianbi said:"I have my orders to kill Yu Peiyu, therefore I had to kill reverend Tiangang. But don't forget you're my accomplice, if you want to kill me you have to punish yourself too."

Hong Lianhua said regretfully:"That was the biggest mistake in my entire life. I was so stupid in believing you. I will punish myself for this in the future. But you....you.."

With speed Hong Lianhua attacked with 3, 4 fists. Not many people in Wulin have duelled with Hong Lianhua. But now Xie Tianbi realised that this young leader of the Beggars Association had awesome fist and palm stances. Every stance was generated with extremely powerful internal energy.

Especially now, he generated his anger into his fists and palms. This alone could struck fear in the hearts of people.

Yu Peiyu now shouted:"You cannot kill him!"

Both Hong Lianhua and Xie Tianbi were surprised by his roar. Hong Lianhua asked angrily:"Why can't I kill him?"

Yu Peiyu used his left hand to unseal his three sealed acupoints and stood up. He looked very pale and his eyes were filled with hate. This normally frail, gentle-looking young man has turned into a savage now.

Yu Peiyu said loudly:"Not only did this fiend kill my father he also killed my teacher. ONLY I AM ALLOWED TO KILL THIS BASTARD!"

Hong Lianhua smiled wryly:"Alright! He is all yours."

Yu Peiyu stormed towards Xie Tianbi, Hong Lianhua saw that his footwork was not stable and his movements were flawed. Those were the effects of his pain and anger, Hong Lianhua warned Yu Peiyu:"You must be cautious."

Xie Tianbi laughed sinisterly:"If someone's near him to help why should he be cautious."

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said:"No one is going to help me kill you."

Xie Tianbi felt assured and said arrogantly:"That is more like it! I hope you will stick by your word."

If he warded off the attack while he was talking and backed up against the tree and pulled out the sword.

He used the sword to attack with 7 fast techniques.

This "Swift Rapid Gale Sword" was not a Diancang skill, but when it came to the viciousness of the techniques it was above any Diancang swordsmanship.

Yu Peiyu chose the attack as a form of defense and didn't care anymore. Xie Tianbi's techniques seemed to be losing effect against his powerful will to win.

Suddenly Xie's attacks sliced open Yu Peiyu's robe and made three flesh wounds. But the heavy rainfall washed away the blood very quickly.

Hong Lianhua stood there worried about Yu Peiyu. He finally realised that this refined young man was a formidable fighter.

But although Yu Pei had had the will to kill this Xie Tianbi, but his strength was gradually weakening. And Hong Lianhua couldn't intervene.

Xie Tianbi began his assault again, his plan was to weaken Yu Peiyu out first by only defending and attack when he was tired.

Yu Peiyu was wounded at several places by his sword.

Hong Lianhua was feeling very sad by this battle. All of a sudden Yu Peiyu's chest was left unguarded. Xie Tianbi saw his chance and aimed his sword directly towards his chest. Hong Lianhua cried out and rushed forward. But this wicked Xie Tianbi was too quick, Hong Lianhua closed his eyes couldn't bear to watch anymore.

Xie Tianbi laughed evilly, he was certain he was going to kill Yu Peiyu.

But somehow Yu Peiyu placed his palms mysteriously on the blade and pressed on both sides. The sword couldn't advance forward, Yu Peiyu used his elbow to hit Xie Tianbi on the chest.

Yu Peiyu consequently used his palm to smack Xie Tianbi on the face. The force of that smack sent Xie Tianbi flying in the air.

The press against the blade, the elbow and the smack were performed almost in one breath.

Yu Peiyu didn't give Xie Tianbi the chance to land and caught him in the air and used his palms to press against his chest and a few of his ribs were broken by that squash.

At first Hong Lianhua could hear Xie Tianbi panting heavily after Yu Peiyu began pressing Xie Tianbi's chest his panting became weaker and weaker.

Hong Lianhua yelled:"Don't kill him yet! I want to question him first!"

Yu Peiyu dropped Xie Tianbi on the ground and raised his head and said:"Did I finally defeat him?....I finally have defeated him..."

Xie Tianbi collapsed on the ground and couldn't move anymore.

Hong Lianhua took Yu Peiyu by the hand and asked excitedly:"Those techniques you used, are they the famous "An Antelope Putting Up His Horns" and "The Outer Sky Rainbow?"

I have heard that old master Yu was renowned for these 2 techniques and were 2 special skills of the Xiantian Wuji School."

Yu Peiyu said tragically:"My father never used these stances to harm anyone in his life. But I...I..."

Yu Peiyu couldn't stop himself from weeping again.

Hong Lianhua was impressed with those 2 stances and sighed:"Very sophisticated stances! Very superb martial arts! Truly perfect and miraculous. The skills of ancient Wulin seniors are truly amazing."

He tapped on Yu Peiyu on the shoulders and laughed:"Why didn't you tell me earlier that you had such high martial arts. I was worried sick."

Yu Peiyu said:"I...I..."

Suddenly he fell into Hong Lianhua's arms. The fight had exhausted him.

Hong Lianhua quickly took out a pill and put it in Yu Peiyu's mouth and said:"This is The Lesser Return Pill of Kunlun, it is known to be the best herbal stimulant in the world."

Yu Peiyu asked:"The Lesser Return Pill? That's a very precious medicine, you should keep it yourself."

Hong Lianhua looked sadly and said after awhile:"It...reverend Tiangang gave it to you."

Yu Peiyu exclaimed:"Master, master....he...he.."

Hong Lianhua sighed:"I found the pill in the rice cake. I thought there was poison in the rice cake, I never thought..."

Yu Peiyu wept:"That's why master said the rice cake was very special not everyone could eat it. Xie Tianbi, the bastard!"

He turned around to look at Xie Tianbi and was horrified.

Xie Tianbi still lay there but his head was gone.

They now had a headless corpse, Yu Peiyu and Hong Lianhua looked at each other with with disbelief.

Both of them wondered what happened to the head, no one could have chopped off his head in a few moments and disappeared in a flash.

Although Hong Lianhua was a very intelligent man, he couldn't figure out what happened to the head of Xie Tianbi.

Hong Lianhua and Yu Peiyu looked at each other with disbelief and surprise.

When they took another closer look of the body, they saw that a part of the shoulders was gone too.

Hong Lianhua exclaimed:"I understand now!"

Yu Peiyu asked:"You have figured it out?"

Hong Lianhua sighed:"Take another closer look of the body."

Yu saw that the corpse was dissolving piece by piece. The flesh and blood turned into this pus and the rain washed it away.

Yu Peiyu was horrified and disgusted when he saw this, he almost threw up.

He took a deep breath and asked:" Could this be the infamous poison, the Bone Melting Pellet?"

Hong Lianhua answered:" I'm afraid so. He knew he was going to die anyhow so he wanted to take all the secrets down to the grave with him."

Yu Peiyu said:" I broke his arms how could he have taken the pellet?"

Hong Lianhua deducted:" I think the pellet was hidden somewhere in his mouth. When he was defeated by you he must have bitten into the tip of his tongue and crushed the protective layer around the pellet. It is said that the Bone Melting Pellet becomes poisonous after mixing it with blood. So the blood of his tongue started the process. (sigh*) He would rather rot away than reveal any secrets."

Yu Peiyu said with a hint of respect:" Never thought he would be that brave!"

Hong Lianhua smiled wryly:" If you think he was brave you were wrong. He knew if he revealed anything to us his fate would be even worse."

Yu Peiyu smiled tragically too:" You're right. All these men were not afraid of death but feared the mastermind. Who can this man be? Death is something dreadful but somehow he managed to become even more dreadful than death itself."

Hong Lianhua said softly:" He is truly more dreadful than death. I can't possibly imagine what kind of man he is."

Yu Peiyu said suddenly:" This fake Xie Tianbi did this because he wanted to protect the secret of his disguise. Because if he died "normally", we could have examined his mask carefully and perhaps find some clues.

Hong Lianhua said:" You're absolutely right."

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said:" That's why the mastermind prepared those pellets. Dying is not enough for

him, his henchmen were to disappear completely if they were captured."

He took Hong Lianhua by the hand and said:"At this moment I know that at least 6 people are imposters. And except for you no one else believes my story. And up till now nobody knows aboutt their plans. But how many imposters are there? That is something which I do not know either but every time I think aboutt that I'm chilled to the bone."

Hong Lianhua felt depressed too when he thought of this problem.

Yu Peiyu continued:"When your family, friends become the lackeys of this monster. What can you do? There is nobody left you can believe and trust. What options are there?"

Hong Lianhua said:"The fake Xie Tianbi is dead now, but who are his other henchmen?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Wang Yuluo, Ximen Feng, Lin Shoujuan, the Dragon king of Taihu, Silver Spear Shen and that Yu Fang... that Yu character are his men. Because I know that my father and his friends are dead."

Hong Lianhua sighed:"I think there couldn't be more than these 6 men."

Yu Peiyu asked:"How can you be that certain?"

Hong Lianhua explained:"The art of disguise is very difficult to master. And when you have mastered it, it is very hard to disguise yourself as someone else perfectly.

It takes years to learn the way of talking, walking of that person. And not to mention his martial arts."

Yu Peiyu called out:"Of course! Martial arts! If they want those men to look real they have to learn their martial arts."

After saying this he started walking.

Hong Lianhua blocked his way and said calmly:"An Antelope Putting Up His Horns and The Outer Sky Rainbow, right?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Right, these 2 stances belong to us, the family Yu. No one else in the world knows these 2 techniques. If that Yu character cannot display these 2 techniques I will have proof he is an imposter."

Hong Lianhua sighed:"This is a good plan but it will be useless against your father's reputation."

Yu Peiyu asked why.

Hong Lianhua explained:"Old master Yu was a famous gentleman. Nobody could have forced him to use martial arts when he was alive."

Yu Peiyu understood where he was getting at and felt lost again.

At this time the entire corpse of the fake Xie Tianbi was gone washed away by the rain.

Hong Lianhua was lost too and said softly:"At least the murderer of reverend Tiangang is dead. But to be honest who did actually kill him? Who can proof it?"

Yu Peiyu shivered when he heard Hong Lianhua talking and said:"But you....you don't have to..."

Hong Lianhua laughed:"Don't worry! I want to punish myself but I won't commit suicide and make those conspirators happy."

Yu Peiyu felt relieved and said:"I knew you were an extraordinary man."

Hong Lianhua looked up and said:"But there is one thing that I have to do."

Yu Peiyu watched him and said:"Going to Mount Kunlun?"

Hong Lianhua said:"The Kunlun disciples deserve to know what happened to reverend Tiangang. It is my duty to inform them."

Yu Peiyu said:"I will go on your behalf."

Hong Lianhua looked at him and smiled:"Alright!"

There was no need for pleasantries or formalities. That's the way of a true man a true hero.

They two of them stood there in the rain looking at each other. Hong Lianhua said:"You have to be careful. Just keep focus on your objectives. Your life is very important."

Yu Peiyu said:"I understand."

Yu Peiyu picked up the sword that he hit out of Xie Tianbi's hands and stuck it into his girdle.

Hong Lianhua added:"Before I forget, a bit of good news."

Yu Peiyu quickly asked:"What?"

Hong Lianhua said:"It is aboutt your fiancée, Lin Daiyu. You don't have to worry aboutt her anymore."

There was always something very strange aboutt Hong Lianhua's expression when he mentioned Lin Daiyu. Although he was smiling his smile wasn't very convincing.

Yu Peiyu didn't notice the change in Hong Lianhua's expression and asked:"How come?"

Hong Lianhua said:"She is being protected by a very formidable Wulin dignitary."

Yu Peiyu said:"I feel assured when the leader of the Beggars Association is keeping an eye out for her."

Hong Lianhua said with a smile:"It isn't me." His face changed again.

Yu Peiyu was puzzled and said:"A formidable Wulin dignitary? Reverend Chuchen of Wudang?"

Hong Lianhua laughed:"Although this person isn't as famous as reverend Chuchen. But people would rather offend him than offend this person."

Yu Peiyu suddenly thought of someone and said:"The most gorgeous of flowers! The Cherry Blossom Hai Tang. Madame Hai Tang of the Baihua Association."

Hong Lianhua praised:"Very good! I think she suspects something and is starting her own investigation."

Yu Peiyu said:"It seems we're not alone in our quest."

Hong Lianhua suddenly called out:"Damn! I forgot another important thing!"

Yu Peiyu asked carefully:"Is this "thing" good or bad?"

Hong Lianhua stamped with his feet:"There is a fake Xie Tianbi running amok. What happened to the real Xie Tianbi? I hope he is alright. I have to look for him."

As soon as he finished he was gone.

Yu Peiyu softly sung to himself:"Here he comes, here he goes. Unmatched throughout history. He is very intelligent and enlightened. Unparalleled by others. He roams the world and is very righteous..."

It was still raining, suddenly 7, 8 horses rode by. Yu Peiyu didn't pay attention to them. But one of the riders dismounted and flew in front of Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu was startled to paced back one step.

Yu Peiyu recognized this rider, it was the Diancang disciple he met earlier, Yang Junbi.

Yu Peiyu remembered what Hong Lianhua said before he left and asked:"Did something happen to master Xie?"

Yang Junbi wanted to greet him but when he heard Yu Peiyu's question his face changed.

He asked:"Young master Yu, how do you know?"

Yu Peiyu was startled and stuttered:"I...I..."

Yang Junbi looked even more serious now and his eyes were brightening up and said loudly:"I wanted to inform young master Yu aboutt this tragedy. But it seems you already knew. Isn't that a strange thing?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly:"I just asked casually."

Yang Junbi said:"My leading martial arts brother has been missing since last night. Even abbot Tianyun and reverend Chuchen were informed just awhile ago. Young master Yu left early in the morning, how did you know?"

His words were sharp and insinuated that Yu Peiyu had something to do with the disappearance of Xie Tianbi.

At this point the other Diancang disciples rode back and were looking at Yu too with stern eyes.

Diancang disciples were known to be friendly and gentle but when something is amiss they are very vigilant and cautious.

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Master Xie could have met up with some old friends. But with Master Xie's martial arts he is very capable of taking care of himself."

Yang Junbi said sharply:"Diancang disciples always carry their swords with them. If the sword is present so is the wielder. If the wielder is dead, the sword will be lost. Young master Yu must have heard of this saying before. We discovered the sword of leading brother Xie outside his tent somewhere in the grass. Unless something has happened to him he wouldn't be that careless."

Yu Peiyu said:"This...this..."

Suddenly he realised he knew a lot of secrets but he couldn't tell anyone anything about these secrets and furthermore no one would believe him.

Another Diancang disciple on a horse asked loudly:"Young master Yu, why are you alone? Isn't reverend Tiangang with you?"

Another disciple on the horse said sharply:"Judging by young master Yu's clothes you must have fought someone."

Another disciple said loudly:"There is no one around here. Young master Yu, who was your adversary?"

Chapter 4 : The Haunting During A Stormy Night

The girl stood there smiling in a silly way.

Yu Peiyu asked: "Miss, can I ask you a few questions?"

The girl nodded.

He asked: "What is this place?"

She shook her head.

He was disappointed and sighed and asked: "Are you one of the persons who lives here?"

The girl smiled: "I'm not a person."

Yu Peiyu couldn't answer the questions of those Diancang disciples.

He couldn't tell them that reverend Tiangang died at the hands of that fake Xie Tianbi. He couldn't tell them that this Xie Tianbi was an imposter. And that the body of Xie Tianbi was gone.

Also no one would believe him if he did.

Yang Junbi angrily asked: "Why don't you answer our questions, young master Yu?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "If all of you already suspect me being involved in the disappearance of master Xie, which is ridiculous, what else can I say."

Yang Junbi was somewhat pleased by this answer and wasn't looking that fierce as before. He said: "If that's the case, would you mind returning with us. If young master Yu cannot explain certain matters to us, but you can certainly tell them to chancellor Yu."

Before he finished this sentence Yu Peiyu's face changed and said: "I can't go back, absolutely not."

Again all the Diancang disciples loudly questioned: "Why not?"

"If you haven't done anything wrong why are that afraid."

All the Diancang disciples dismounted and looked at Yu Peiyu with suspicion and anger.

Yang Yunbi said sternly:"Yu Peiyu, it is impossible for you to escape now. I suggest you go back with us!"

Yu Peiyu was sweating at this moment and because of the rain he was feeling cold all over.

From a bit further a voice said coldly:"Yu Peiyu, you don't have to go anywhere!"

7, 8 Taoist priests carrying umbrellas walked this way. Obviously these were Kunlun disciples.

Yang Junbi said sternly:" Even if he's a Kunlun disciple he has to go back with us. Kunlun and Diancang have always been friends, but this matter concerns the life and death of our leading brother Xie. So Taoist brother please forgive us for being rude."

The faces of the Kunlun disciples looked even more fierce and dark than the Diancang disciples.

The leading Kunlun disciple was a pale-looking Taoist priest with a short moustache. He looked at Yu Peiyu with deadly eyes and said:"You do not have to go anywhere."

Yu Peiyu backed one step and Yang Junbi asked:"What is going on here?"

The pale-looking Taoist priest said sadly:"Master Xie's whereabouts are unknown, but our leader reverend Tiangang is....is..." His umbrella fell to the ground he used too much force on the handle and broke the umbrella.

Yang Junbi was startled and asked:"Did reverend Tiangang pass...away?"

The pale-looking Taoist said tragically:"Our teacher was ambushed, he was stabbed by a sword through the back."

Yang Junbi said:"Unbelievable?"

The Taoist continued:"We just found the body of our teacher and have put in a coffin."

Yang Junbi said:"Reverend Tiangang's martial arts has reached the level of perfection. Falling leaves within metres cannot escape his ears. It is highly unlikely he was ambushed."

The Taoist gritted his teeth and said:"If our teacher was betrayed by someone he trusts. Someone close to him, our teacher would never have suspected that person would betray him."

While he said this he stared at Yu Peiyu with pure hate.

Now the Taoist spoke to Yu Peiyu and screamed:"Yu Peiyu, how did the master die? Tell us! Tell us!"

Yu Peiyu trembled and said:"Master...he...master...he..."

The Taoist yelled:"Did you kill the master?"

Yu Peiyu shook his hands and quickly yelled:"No, I did not! I would never harm the master."

Someone pulled out the sword out of his girdle and gave it to the Taoist.

The Taoist held the sword and pointed it at Yu Peiyu and said:"Is this the sword that killed our master? Did you use this sword to kill him?"

This sword was indeed the murder weapon, but the user of this sword was dead now. And Yu Peiyu was carrying this sword at the moment.

Yu Peiyu felt like his heart was bleeding and stepped back a few paces.

Everyone looked at him with fierce eyes.

Yu Peiyu knelt down and looked up into the air and screamed:"Heaven! Heaven! What have I done wrong? Do I really deserve to suffer this much? Do I deserve to die?"

Suddenly the sword landed in front of him.

The Taoist said: "This is your only way and the most easy way."

Indeed this way, the only choice he had. This is absolutely impossible to explain, no one will believe him. The truth sounds so strange and bizarre.

His only witness is Hong Lianhua. But can he convince the people of Kunlun and Diancang. Does Hong Lianhua have proof?

Normally, the disciples of Kunlun and Diancang would certainly believe the words of Hong Lianhua.

However, this matter concerned the life and death of the leaders of Kunlun and Diancang. Even the very essence and survival of these 2 schools. Perhaps this matter would concern the entire Wulin.

So they wouldn't believe Hong Lianhua unless he had solid evidence.

Yu Peiyu thought everything over and knew he didn't have a choice. He picked up the sword with rage and stormed out of the encirclement of Kunlun and Diancang disciples.

All the Diancang and Kunlun disciples were calling out in surprise and were totally confused.

But still they were disciples of the 2 prominent Wulin schools and some of them quickly composed themselves and drew their swords and aimed at Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu used his sword to block these attacks and send those swords flying.

Yu Peiyu put all his grievances, rage and injustice into those stances.

Everyone was shocked that this young man had such tremendous force.

Before they had a chance to organize themselves Yu Peiyu was long gone.

Yu Peiyu fled, there was no other choice for him. He had to stay alive to find out the truth.

It was still raining and he could hear his pursuers closing in on him.

He was feeling exhausted and the rain clouded his sight. In a haze he thought he saw a carriage riding by.

He couldn't keep it up anymore and fell down and fainted.

When he woke up he saw that he was inside a carriage. Was he captured after all?

He look around and saw a lamp, broom and some other ordinary things. He pulled away the cloth and saw an old man riding the carriage.

Judging by his beard and clothes he was quite old and an ordinary poor man.

Yu Peiyu felt relieved now.

The old man smiled:"Yu Peiyu are you awake?"

Yu Peiyu was startled and asked:"How did you know my name?"

The old man laughed:"Just awhile ago I heard a bunch of people calling out: Yu Peiyu come out now! So I figured you must be Yu Peiyu."

Yu Peiyu took a closer look at the old man and saw that his eyes were filled with wisdom and he looked very benevolent.

Yu Peiyu bowed and said:"Thank you sir! For saving my life."

The old man laughed:"No need to thank me. You don't look like a criminal to me! If you did I would have handed you over to those men."

Yu Peiyu said with a faint smile:"Sir, you're the first man in a very long time that believes that I am good."

The old man laughed:"A young man like you shouldn't be that depressed. We'll go to my house and have some warm soup."

The old man rode the carriage to his house.

Yu Peiyu was thinking that an old cottage might be a good place for him to rest. He was never a fussy man but now luxury had even less meaning in his eyes. And this poor old man could praise himself lucky that he had a house.

Suddenly he heard the old man talking to the horse: "Don't you recognize the way home anymore?"

Yu Peiyu crawled up and took a look outside.

To his amazement he saw a large manor, beautifully decorated and well-preserved.

Yu Peiyu was surprised and asked: "Sir, do you...live here?"

The old man replied: "Yes, I do."

Yu Peiyu was totally surprised and thought: Perhaps this old man is an eccentric man of wealth. Or even a retired government official. Or maybe a robber with a disguise.

Yu Peiyu could only guess what the motives of this old man were.

Yu Peiyu looked outside and saw a few horses standing near 2 large fierce-looking stone lions near the gate.

There were a few big fellows standing next to the horses.

Yu Peiyu wondered who the riders were at this point he knew that this old man was a prominent figure in Wulin.

Yu Peiyu felt scared he knew that he had a lot of enemies in Wulin.

Suddenly Yu Peiyu peeked through a small hole and saw 2 men walking towards the carriage one of them was the pale-looking Taoist priest of earlier.

Yu Peiyu felt cold and thought he was doom for it.

The Taoist spoke: "Old benefactor, have you seen a young man on your way here?"

The old man smiled: "I have seen lots of young men. I'm not sure which one you mean."

The Taoist said:"He is wearing a green robe, he is very handsome. But I think at this moment he must look very tired and dirty."

The old man said:"I have seen this young man."

The Taoist quickly asked:"Where did you see him?"

The old man stroked his beard and said:"In fact I captured him."

Yu Peiyu was terrified and almost fainted.

The Taoist priest looked coldly at the old man and said:"Although I believe this young man is exhausted right now. But still impossible for you to capture, old benefactor. Please remember this in the future, benefactor. I, Baihe of Kunlun do not like jokes."

He turned around and walked away.

The old man sighed:"If you know that I cannot capture him. Why do you ask me?"

He whipped the horse and instructed it to go on.

He softly said:"Young lad, you should know by now that the smarter they are the easier you can trick them. You just have to know how to fool them."

Unfortunately Yu Peiyu couldn't hear these words anymore. When he did hear the old man he was already at the old man's house.

The house was indeed quite old and there was mildew here and there.

Yu Peiyu was lying in bed he was wearing new clothes but was still trembling with cold.

With difficulty he got up and staggered to a window and opened it.

He looked out and saw a beautiful large courtyard. But somehow it looked very dark and sinister. Maybe it was the

weather or perhaps it was night now. But the ambiance was very spooky.

Yu Peiyu shivered and thought: What is this place? What is going on here?

Suddenly he saw a lamp floating his way. He was horrified and he heard a melancholic voice singing: "Where on earth can you find a more bright moon? Perhaps in the sweetest dreams. You say you have seen a fairy's laugh. Who can tell it was dream or not?"

Yu Peiyu saw a white apparition coming his way. It was young woman with a pale face, very beautiful but there was something eerie aboutt her.

Yu Peiyu couldn't move anymore.

Suddenly he heard the door opening he turned around and saw the old man walking in.

Yu Peiyu grabbed his hand and asked: "Who is out there?"

The old man smiled: "There is no one out there."

Yu Peiyu opened the door and saw that there was indeed no one.

The old man looked at him with compassion.

Yu Peiyu grabbed the old man again and asked: "Where am I? What place is this? And who are you?"

The old man said calmly: "I'm just an old man who saved your life."

Yu Peiyu let go of him and sat down in a wooden chair, stunned.

The old man said: "You're too tired, you should rest."

Yu Peiyu said: "But I saw..."

The old man interrupted him: "You didn't see anything."

There was something mysterious aboutt his voice. Yu Peiyu felt relaxed and smiled wryly: "You're right. I didn't see anything."

The old man nodded and said:"The less you see the less there is to trouble you."

He put down a bowl of soup and told Yu Peiyu:"Drink up! And get some sleep. Who knows tomorrow could be entirely different from today."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Well, at least today is over."

Yu Peiyu had a nightmare, something black was pressing against him. He couldn't breathe and panted heavily in his sleep.

Suddenly he woke up and saw a white hand in front of him. It looked like if the hand was trying to strangle him.

He called out:"Who! Who is here!"

In the darkness and with the bad lighting he saw a figure with long hair and a pair of beautiful eyes but with a melancholic look.

Now he remembered it was the apparition he saw earlier. The figure seemed to have been startled by him and quickly left through the door. Yu Peiyu was puzzled and couldn't see the old man.

He was very confused and he didn't know whether this apparition was a ghost or a human.

He chased outside and saw the figure standing under a tree.

Yu Peiyu carefully walked closer afraid to startle her again.

When he took a closer look he realised it was a beautiful young woman but it wasn't the same girl he saw through the window.

She seemed more innocent but her looks were very similar.

Yu Peiyu smiled and apologized:"I have mistaken you for someone else, Miss."

She just looked at him for some time and suddenly she turned around and ran away.

Yu Peiyu couldn't help asking:"Miss, do you live here?"

She turned around and smiled at Yu Peiyu. Before he knew it she vanished into the fog. Yu Peiyu couldn't help himself and walked into the fog.

The girl stood there smiling in a silly way.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Miss, can I ask you a few questions?"

The girl nodded.

He asked:"What is this place?"

She shook her head.

He was disappointed and sighed and asked:"Are you one of the persons who lives here?"

The girl smiled:"I'm not a person."

Yu Peiyu was startled by this answer, because this entire place was too eerie for words.

She continued:"I am a bird. Like the ones in the tree."

She looked up and whistled to the birds and smiled silly:"Those are my sisters."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Are you talking to them?"

The girl said happily:"Do you believe that I can talk to them?"

Yu Peiyu said gently:"Of course I believe you."

The girl suddenly looked very sad:"But they don't believe me."

Yu Peiyu said:"Maybe they are fools."

She said happily:"I am a robin."

With that she happily ran off.

Yu Peiyu felt very calm and returned to the old cottage. When he entered a sword was pointing at his back.

A cold voice said:"If you move I will stab you."

It was a very enchanting voice. He turned around and saw it was the girl he met earlier.

The girl coldly asked:"Who are you?"

Yu Peiyu was surprised and a bit annoyed:"Miss Robin, don't you recognize me?"

The girl responded:"Why should I know you?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I was just talking to you."

The girl scoffed:"You must be dreaming."

Why did this girl treat him this way. She was the same girl he met earlier, right?

Again he was totally confused.

And said softly:"I must be dreaming."

The girl fiercely asked:"Who are you? What are you doing in the house of old man Gao? Are you a thief? What are you after? Speak up!"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I don't know, I really don't know a thing anymore."

Everyone in this manor seemed to be crazy, they are friendly to you for one moment and in an instant they treat you like a criminal.

The girl laughed coldly:"You don't know? I will give to the count of 3 to talk. If you remain silent don't blame me for being ruthless."

She counted:"One!"

Yu Peiyu just stood there.

She continued:"Two!"

Yu Peiyu didn't know what to say and kept his mouth shut.

The girl was stunned and finally said:"Three!"

Yu Peiyu moved like a fish in the water and "swam" away from the tip and gently hit the sword out of her hand.

The sword flew up and was stuck in the ceiling.

Yu Peiyu turned around and said coldly:"Miss Robin, stop pretending! Now I have a few questions. And I don't speak the language of the birds so I hope you can talk in the tongue of humans."

The girl smiled sweetly:"I'm just playing with you. I will teach you the language of the birds tomorrow."

And smilingly she walked out the door.

Yu Peiyu called out:"Wait!"

In an instant the old man blocked his way and said:"I saved your life and that doesn't mean you can interrogate other people here."

Yu Peiyu scoffed:"Sir, your timing is excellent! Why didn't you appear when she had her sword pointed at me?"

The old man walked to his chair and sat down. He lighted his pipe and said while smoking:"I'll be honest. There are some strange things going on here in this manor.If you ignore these events no harm will come to you, if not you will certainly find death here."

Yu Peiyu angrily said:"Although I'm willing to be ignorant but that girl wanted to kill me."

The old man sighed:"You should forget aboutt her. They are all very tragic women, we should even forgive them."

He looked very sad.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Who are [they]?"

The old man said:"Why must you know who [they] are?"

Yu Peiyu loudly said:"Why won't you tell me anything?"

The old man sighed:"It is not that I'm not willing. But it is best that you don't know."

Yu Peiyu was silent for a moment and made a bow to the old man:"Sir, I will repay you someday for saving my life."

The old man asked:"You want to leave now?"

Yu Peiyu said:"It is best that I be on my way."

The old man seriously said:"There are aboutt 100 disciples of Diancang and Kunlun in the surroundings. Can you go away unnoticed?"

Yu Peiyu asked:"What's the connection between Diancang, Kunlun and this manor."

The old man said:"If there was a connection, you wouldn't be safe here and listening to me now."

Yu Peiyu said:"You know...you know aboutt my.."

The old man said:"I know everything."

Yu Peiyu yelled:"I didn't kill Xie Tianbi and didn't kill my teacher reverend Tiangang. You have to believe me."

The old man said:"Even if I believe you, will the others too."

Yu Peiyu backed up against the wall.

The old man said:"The best you can do right now is stay here and keep a low profile. After some time they will look for you somewhere else. And I will help you escape then. Meanwhile you can take this chance to rest properly."

Yu Peiyu was moved and his eyes were watery and said:"Sir, why do you help me?"

The old man was still smoking his pipe and said:"Since I saved you I hate to see you die at the hands of someone else."

Suddenly a long rope curled up the sword stuck in the ceiling and pulled it out.

A pretty hand caught the sword and she said:"Old man Gao, my mother wants to speak to him."

The old man looked at Yu Peiyu. Yu Peiyu saw that his face changed a bit and he heard the old man asking the girl:"Your mother wants to talk to who?"

The girl smiled:"Except for you and I who else is here?"

Old man Gao asked:"Why does your mother want talk to him?"

The girl stared at Yu Peiyu and said:"I don't know. Just quickly take him to mother."

After saying that she left.

Old man Gao sat in his chair not moving for some time.

Yu Peiyu couldn't help asking:"Who is her mother?"

Old man Gao replied:"The lady of the manor."

He put away his pipe and told Yu Peiyu:"Follow me, but be careful. Some Diancang and Kunlun disciples have entered the manor."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I do not understand. You have hidden me here but also you're allowing them to look for me right here. But since you have let them inside why are you afraid that they might see me."

Old man Gao ignored his remarks and kept walking.

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly:"I'm going to see the lady of the manor. May I at least know what the name is of this manor."

Old man Gao replied:"The Murder Manor."

They were moving through a long corridor.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Murder Manor?"

Old Man Gao said:"A very strange name, isn't it?"

Yu Peiyu asked:"Why the strange name?"

Old man Gao answered:"Here anyone is allowed to murder and kill. No one will interfere and ask. And anybody can be killed or murdered here and nobody will come and save you."

Yu Peiyu got goosebumps all over and said:"Why? But why?"

Old man Gao earnestly said:"It is for your own good that you don't know the reason."

Yu Peiyu continued:"But why doesn't somebody say something about it?"

Old man Gao said:"No one will and nobody dares."

Yu Peiyu said:" But why doesn't the lord of the manor do something aboutt it?"

Old man Gao turned around and had a strange smile on his face and said:"The reason why the lord doesn't interfere is...."

They heard footsteps walking this way, Old man Gao pulled Yu Peiyu into a chamber.

They saw 2 Taoist priests in purple robes walking by. On their backs they carried 2 long swords.

Yu Peiyu waited till they were gone and asked:" Does this mean that anyone can walk aboutt freely here?"

Old man Gao said:"If their intentions are to kill they can walk freely and undisturbed. But the hunted should be very very careful around here."

Yu Peiyu asked:"How come the hunted would come here? If they know that at any time here they might get murdered or killed. Aren't there safer places to hide?"

Old man Gao said:"Maybe they have no place to go but here. Or perhaps they don't know the rules of the manor. Or maybe they were lured here by their enemies. Perhaps they came here to kill someone else."

Yu Peiyu exclaimed:"All 4 motives are very convincing. But what aboutt the lord of the manor....."

Someone suddenly said:"Mother, here he is."

Yu Peiyu saw it was the girl he met earlier. She was standing outside a big door and staring at him.

Old man Gao walked up the door and said:"Madame, you wanted to see him?"

A voice at the other side said softly:"Enter."

Although she just said one word but it seemed like it was a voice from the netherworld.

Yu Peiyu entered and saw the lady of the manor.

And there were 2 young girls standing next to her. Both looked exactly the same. Twins!

They were the girls Yu Peiyu met earlier in the courtyard and the cottage.

That explains it.

One looked very innocent and silly, the other looked quite mean and cold.

All 3 women were very pretty but all looked sad, melancholic.

He remembered the words of old man Gao:"They are all very tragic women, we should even forgive them."

But why are they sad? What is their story?

The lady spoke:"It is quite dark here, isn't it?"

Yu Peiyu replied:"Yes, it is!"

She continued in her gloomy tone:"I like darkness, I don't care much for the sun. Sunlight is only for happy people. But darkness belongs to people who are sad."

Yu Peiyu thought:Why do you keep on being sad and depressed?

But Yu Peiyu didn't say a word. The gloominess of the room made him uncomfortable.

The woman asked:"What is your name?"

Yu Peiyu said:"My name is..."

Old man Gao coughed and Yu Peiyu said:"Ye. Ye Peiyu."

The woman asked:"So it is not Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu was startled.

The woman said:"A long time ago someone with the family name Yu killed someone very close to me. I always hated those Yu's, anyone with the name Yu can't be a good person."

Yu Peiyu didn't know what to say and just said yes and nodded.

The woman said:"I am very glad that you are here. I hope you will stay a bit longer I do enjoy talking to you."

In fact Yu Peiyu hardly talked to the woman at all.

But he said:"Thank you, Madame."

Suddenly the cold twin quickly walked up to him and used the scabbard of her sword to hit Yu Peiyu's calf. Yu Peiyu knelt down in pain.

Someone opened the door and walked in. It was Baihe of the Kunlun School.

And following Baihe was Yang Junbi of Diancang.

The girl scolded Yu Peiyu:"The next time you dare to disobey the orders of the lady I will break your legs. Now go and clean up the courtyard!"

Yu Peiyu said with a low voice:"Yes, Miss!"

Baihe and Yang Junbi were looking around but ignored the simple "servant."

Baihe approached the lady of the manor and said:"Benefactress, have you seen a strange young man here?"

The woman said coldly:"The only stranger I see is you."

Baihe continued:"But someone did see..."

The girl said fiercely:"Are you implying that my mother and I are hiding that stranger?"

Baihe was stunned by her question and smiled apologetically:"That is not my meaning."

The girl scoffed:"What is the meaning of this? A Taoist priest storming into the sleeping quarters of a woman. I take it you're not here to recite Taoist scriptures."

Baihe was now lost for words and could maintain his smile with trouble:"I have asked the lord..."

The girl said:"If you want to kill anyone go right ahead and search every room. Except for this room, this is my mother's room."

Baihe said:"Yes, I understand. Yes..."

He bowed to the woman and her daughters and quickly left and Yang Junbi followed and closed the door.

Yu Peiyu was still sweating.

The woman looked at him and asked:"Why are you afraid? You don't have to tell me, everyone that comes here is afraid of something."

She turned to old man Gao and said:"You can go now."

Old man Gao said:"He..."

She answered:"He will stay here, I would like to talk to him."

Old man Gao was hesitant for a minute but said:"Yes, Madame."

And left the room too, the twins followed and closed the door behind. Yu Peiyu sat down in one of the chairs.

Yu Peiyu was quite scared of the lady of the manor. She kept looking at him. He heard laughter outside after awhile.

He walked to a window and looked outside. He saw a black cat running and a little elderly man chasing the cat. The man was skinny and small, he wore a long robe. Although he had a beard but he was no taller than a child. And he had the expression of a child.

Several men outside were watching this midget chase the cat too and were laughing and some of them used pebbles to throw at the cat.

Yu Peiyu sighed when he saw this.

The woman spoke:"Why do you sigh?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I feel sorry for this man, he is being ridiculed because how he looks."

The woman said without a trace of emotion:"That man is my husband."

Yu Peiyu was surprised and said": "He is the lord of the manor."

She said coldly:"Yes, he is."

Yu Peiyu returned to his seat and sat there not saying a word for some time.

Now he knew why old man Gao called them tragic women. Also he began to understand why anyone could come here and kill and murder.

The lord of the manor is a pathetic midget who is respected by nobody.

The lady just sat there in her seat staring at Yu Peiyu. Yu Peiyu was feeling sorry for her and her daughters.

After some time a servant brought some tea and light refreshments. Yu Peiyu was feeling quite hungry and finished them all.

The only thing the lady did all this time was staring at him.

Yu Peiyu couldn't help wondering:"WHY DOES SHE KEEP STARING AT ME?"

Yu Peiyu was feeling sorry for her but also his curiosity was aroused.

It was night now, the lady suddenly asked:"Would you mind accompanying me for a stroll in the yard?"

As they 2 of them walked in the big courtyard Yu Peiyu saw a strange house in the yard. There were no windows and the big iron door was rusted. Yu Peiyu was curious and walked towards it.

The lady said:"Don't go there."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Why?"

"Anyone who goes in there will die," she said calmly.

She smiled mysteriously and added:"That house is full of dead people. Whoever enters will have to share their fate."

The lady said:"That is the family grave of the Ji family. All the ancestors of the Ji family are buried there. All the Ji ancestors were mad when they were alive and now they're dead they are still mad. Everyone in the Ji family is crazy"

Madame Ji held the hand of Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu had goosebumps again. And he felt that her hand was ice-cold.

They walked down a small path, Madame Ji stopped in front of a well and said softly:"This is a strange well."

Yu Peiyu asked:"How come?"

The lady explained:"This well is called "The Demonic Mirror."

It is said that it can predict your future. When the moon is bright and you look into the well it will reveal your future."

Madame Ji said:"Why don't you try?"

Yu Peiyu was quite curious aboutt this and couldn't help to look down.

All of a sudden Madame Ji began screaming:"BLOOD! BLOOD!"

Suddenly the fence around the well broke and Yu Peiyu fell into the well.

Madame Ji was running away screaming:"BLOOD! THE DEMONIC MIRROR!"

Yu Peiyu fell into the well and was thinking:Why won't she rescue me?

This is the second time I fall into a well.

Yu Peiyu couldn't help sighing to his series of misfortune and bad luck that didn't seem to go away.

He was feeling cold and wet.

The night passed and the first light appeared.

After a very long time he heard someone singing and talking to the birds.

And a pretty face appeared above the well.

Yu Peiyu happily called out: "Miss Robin..."

Miss Robin said: "Oh it is you. No wonder I couldn't understand you. You're not a bird."

Yu Peiyu said: "I wish I was a bird right now."

Miss Robin said: "Since you're not a bird. Goodbye!"

"Wait!" Yu Peiyu called out.

"Won't you at least help me get out of this well?" he said.

Miss Robin said: "Why should I help you?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Because...because..I..."

Miss Robin laughed: "Even you can't come up with a good reason. I'm off."

Yu Peiyu was totally bemused by this situation. He had a mind to slap her silly at this moment.

Suddenly he remembered the words of Madame Ji: "Everyone in the Ji family is crazy."

Yu Peiyu was sulking at this moment and wetted his lips with some water.

Suddenly a long rope dropped down, he was thrilled and called out: "Thanks!"

He climbed out of the well and saw Miss Robin standing next to the well. She was smiling in her usual silly way. She had a small pretty bird in her hand.

Yu Peiyu asked her: "Why did you help me after all?"

Miss Robin said: "She told me to help you. Didn't you my little sister?"

She was talking to the bird in her hand.

The bird was chirping.

Yu Peiyu couldn't tell anymore whether this girl was pretending to be silly or really was mentally challenged.

He asked: "Can you really understand her chirping?"

Miss Robin was a bit annoyed by his question: "You don't believe me either."

Yu Peiyu quickly said: "I believe you. I really do. But how did you learn their language?"

She happily said: "I just understand them when I'm around them."

Yu Peiyu looked at her and actually believed her. He suddenly asked: "Are they happy?"

Miss Robin lifted her hand and thought for a moment and said: "Some of them are, some of them aren't."

She happily added: "At least they are happier than silly humans."

Yu Peiyu nodded and said: "You're right aboutt that."

Miss Robin laughed: "I'm glad you understand, you should..."

The bird in her hand suddenly flew up, Miss Robin's face changed.

Yu Peiyu asked: "Miss, why.."

She waved her hand and she quickly ran off. Yu Peiyu thought: "She does look like a little fragile bird."

Yu Peiyu heard someone digging further up ahead and walked over.

He hid in the bushes and saw a midget digging. It was the lord of the manor. And next to him was the black cat. It was dead now, and by the looks of it. It died quite awfully.

One can hardly tell anymore that it was a cat.

Chapter 5 : Back From The Dead

Ji Lingfeng said:"If you want to live you will have to listen to me. If not you're free to go as you please." After she said this she opened the door. Ji Lingfeng said:"Ji Zanghua won't dare to come in here. I have some hold over him and with that I can protect you."

The lord of the manor put the cat into the hole. He was burying the cat, and Yu Peiyu could hear the lord talking to himself softly:"It is said that a cat has 9 lives, but why do you only have 1. Poor thing! Are you trying to fool me? Or am I easily tricked?"

Yu Peiyu sighed when he saw that this little man had such a benevolent heart.

The lord heard the sigh and called out:"Who is there?"

Yu Peiyu walked out and gently said:"Don't be afraid. I have no ill intentions."

The lord was looking at him in a nervous way and asked:"Who are you?"

Yu Peiyu tried his best not to scare him and smiled:"I am a guest at your manor. My name is Yu Peiyu."

Yu Peiyu didn't want to lie to this poor man. Also he felt that this man was very kind. Anyone who takes the effort of burying a dead cat can't be all bad, can he?

The lord seemed to have calmed down and smiled:"You're a guest, I am your host. I am Ji Zanghua."

Yu Peiyu said:"I know, I met the lady of the manor and your daughters."

Ji Zanghua smiled wryly:"It seems that everyone meets them first."

He added:"But don't listen to them. My wife is a bit mad, quite mad. No, she is a madwoman. My eldest daughter is

very fierce, nobody would dare to offend her. Even I am afraid of her. Although she is pretty she is ruthless. The next time you see them, quickly hide."

Yu Peiyu was surprised that he would talk about his wife and daughter in this way. He didn't know if he was telling the truth. But why would he lie to him.

Ji Zanghua said:"I'm just giving some advice, they are my family I wouldn't tell lies about them."

Yu Peiyu sighed and said:"Thank you, Mr. Ji."

Yu Peiyu asked:"What about the girl who talks to birds?"

Ji Zanghua laughed:"You mean Lingyan, she wouldn't harm anyone. She is...she is mentally handicapped."

Yu Peiyu said softly:"Oh I see, mentally handicapped."

Suddenly they heard some people walking this way.

Ji Zanghua grabbed Yu Peiyu's hand and said:"It is probably them. Don't let them see you, they will kill you. Come, follow me!"

Yu Peiyu remembered the well incident, the strange Madame Ji. So he quickly followed Ji Zanghua. Ji Zanghua swiftly made a few turns here and there.

They arrived at a small pavilion, Ji Zanghua said:"You'll be safe here, nobody will come here."

Yu Peiyu asked:"What is this place?"

Ji Zanghua said:"This is where my late father would study Buddhist texts. When he was 50 years old he stayed here and never left this place for 25 years."

Yu Peiyu asked:"But this is such a small place, why did old Mr. Ji have to spend his days here?"

Ji Zanghua said sadly:"My late father felt that he had killed too many people in his younger years. He wanted to repent for his mistakes. He reached a very high cultivation and said that any hardship to the flesh was irrelevant."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Old Mr. Ji was a remarkable man."

Yu Peiyu shook his head when he remembered that Madame Ji said that everyone in the Ji family was crazy.

Ji Zanghua said:"You can stay here, I will bring you food and water. There is already too much bloodshed in this manor. I don't want to see anymore bloodshed."

Yu Peiyu watched him when he walked away and thought:He is wife is mad, his daughter mentally handicapped. He himself is a midget. He is even more unfortunate than I, but he managed to be an altruist. I wonder if I can do the same thing in his position.

He sat on the pillow and saw that they were no windows. Just those paper walls surrounding the pavilion.

Suddenly he saw some markings on the floor, he wiped away the dust and saw the 8 trigrams were carved on the floor.

Being a disciple of the Xiantian Wuji School learning and studying the secrets of divine formations was compulsory.

So he knew that there was something strange about this carving of the eight trigrams. So he used his knowledge of this art to find out what secret was hidden here.

He used his finger to touch some lines of the eight trigrams and suddenly the pillow shifted and a secret passage beneath was opened.

Yu Peiyu was curious and entered the secret passage. At this point suddenly 20 odd swords pierced through the oil paper walls. Missing Yu Peiyu by a hair.

Yu Peiyu broke out in a cold sweat, if he hadn't discovered the markings and if he didn't study the art of formations he was dead now.

He quickly entered the secret passage and sealed the entrance with the pillow again.

The wielders of the sword stormed in and saw no one was here.

They were all Kunlun and Diancang disciples.

One of them said:"Where did he go?"

Baihe said angrily:"How did he know we were coming?"

"He cannot have gone far, let us search!" someone said.

All of them left the pavilion and continued their search.

Yu Peiyu crawled out when he was sure everyone was gone for some time.

He knew that everyone in this manor is stark raving mad.

Suddenly he heard someone calling:"Young master Ye. Ye Peiyu."

He knew that only Madame Ji and her daughters would call him by this name.

He quickly hid in the secret passage again.

Although the secret passage was quite long and was bound to lead to a particular place, Yu Peiyu just stayed near the entrance. He was too tired to go and investigate.

After some time he fell asleep.

Suddenly the pillow shifted and Yu Peiyu was startled and looked up he saw Ji Zanghua.

Ji Zanghua said:"Thank goodness! You're all right."

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said:"What are you trying to pull now?"

Ji Zanghua hit himself on the chest and said:"It is all my fault, my wife saw me taking you here. So she must have informed those Kunlun and Diancang killers."

Yu Peiyu scoffed:"Why should I believe you?"

Ji Zanghua said:"If I betrayed you why would come here and help you now."

Yu Peiyu felt that he was right and said:"My apologies for being rude."

Yu Peiyu leapt out and Ji Zanghua put the pillow back in place.

Ji Zanghua said:"This isn't the time for apologies."

Suddenly arrogantly said:"Do you think you can escape now, Yu Peiyu!"

3 swords stabbed towards Yu Peiyu. Ji Zanghua screamed:"Stop! Don't fight!"

But nobody paid any attention to him and those attackers continued their assault on Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu was cut on 2 different places, the disciples of Kunlun and Diancang had him surrounded.

Yu Peiyu did his best to ward off the attacks, but he was heavily outnumbered and before he knew it he was cut again.

Baihe said:"Keep him alive! We want to interrogate him first."

Yu Peiyu flew up towards Baihe, suddenly he changed direction and one of the pillars of the pavilion was struck down.

It was Yu Peiyu who broke the pillar with his bare fist. The roof came crashing down, Yu Peiyu picked up the heavy pillar and swept it towards the Diancang and Kunlun people.

Everyone screamed and panicked and one Diancang disciple was hit on the chest and fainted. A few of his ribs were broken. 2 swords were hit out of the hands of 2 disciples.

Baihe shouted and directed the attack:"He is insane! He is not even human. If we can't take him alive we will take him dead."

Yu Peiyu whirled the pillar and nobody could get close to him.

Ji Zanghua who stood far and far away from the fight said softly:"What an impressive strength! What an impressive power!"

Everyone wielded their swords around hoping that they could see a window of opportunity to attack Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu was unaware of everything around him at this time. He was in a trance he just wanted to get away from them. Suddenly he chucked the pillar straightforward. The pillar travelled with incredible speed and was headed towards a Kunlun Taoist. It was too late for him to avoid the pillar and the pillar pierced right through his body.

He screamed in pain and wasn't dead yet. Blood splattered everywhere, everyone was too frightened and quickly moved aside.

Yu Peiyu closely followed the pillar and stormed out.

He just ran and ran and suddenly saw that strange house. The house of death.

He thought a tomb is perhaps the best hiding-place.

A sword blocked his way and a girl said:"Whoever enters, dies!"

Yu Peiyu recognized her as the eldest daughter of Ji Zanghua. He said tragically:"It is best that I can die at your hands. At least you are not mad..."

Yu Peiyu was too exhausted and fainted again.

When Yu Peiyu woke up he saw he was in the room of Madame Ji.

There was nobody in the room, but now someone opened the door. It was the lord of the manor, Ji Zanghua. Even till now Yu Peiyu had no idea whether this midget was good or evil.

Yu Peiyu got up and said:"There are no grudges between us, why do you want to harm me?"

Ji Zanghua walked to the bed and said apologetically:"I am very sorry. I wanted to help you, but now I have only made things worse. I didn't know that those men were following me."

Yu Peiyu said:"Why don't you go now?"

Ji Zanghua said:"I cannot let you fall into the hands of those women."

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly:"But they just saved me."

Ji Zanghua sighed:"Young man, you don't know what they are planning. They want to torture you and play with you before they kill you."

Yu Peiyu shivered and asked:"Why would they? I haven't done anything to them."

Ji Zanghua said:"You really don't know?"

Yu Peiyu replied:"I haven't the foggiest."

Ji Zanghua explained:"Have you forgotten that my wife hates everybody with the family name Yu?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Of course, I did forget about that."

At this point he believed Ji Zanghua and was ready to go with him.

Ji Zanghua said:"Follow me."

At this moment someone opened the door, it was the eldest daughter of Ji Zanghua.

She coldly looked at Ji Zanghua and showed no signs of respect and love. Only resent and hate.

She coldly called out:"Leave!"

Ji Zanghua jumped up and angrily shouted:"Ji Lingfeng, don't forget I am your father. Show a bit more respect when you talk to your father!"

He was jumping up and down and was practically foaming at the mouth.

Yu Peiyu was stunned that this normally friendly looking midget turned into a frantic madman.

Ji Lingfeng was not afraid and scoffed at her father:"You're refusing to leave?"

Ji Zanghua made a fist and stared at his daughter eyes filled with hate.

Ji Lingfeng stared at her father with scorn, and Ji Zanghua looked at his daughter with hate.

Yu Peiyu was puzzled, how it happened that the relationship between father and daughter had become this bad between both of them.

Ji Zanghua suddenly took a long breath and seemed to have composed himself and said:" Dear daughter, don't get angry. Father will be very sad when you're angry. If it means this much to you I will leave now."

He walked out the door and softly mumbled:"What is this world coming to. Fathers afraid of daughters."

Yu Peiyu was quite shocked to see this entire situation.

Ji Lingfeng coldly said:" Go back to bed!"

Yu Peiyu said:"I do not want to impose anymore. I think it is best that I take my leave."

Ji Lingfeng said:"You believe those words of that midget. Do you really think I would hurt you?"

Yu Peiyu said:" He is still your father, how could you.."

She yelled:" HE IS NOT MY FATHER! HE ISN'T! HE ISN'T...."

Yu Peiyu was a bit surprised of this reaction and didn't know what to say.

After a few moments she composed herself and returned to her normal cold self.

She asked:"Do you really think he is a good man?"

Yu Peiyu didn't answer because he didn't know for sure what Ji Zanghua was.

She laughed and said:" Many people are deceived by him. And till their deaths they don't even know they were betrayed by him."

Yu Peiyu said:"There are no animosities between him and I."

Ji Lingfeng said:"This place is filled with hatred and do you know why?"

Yu Peiyu answered:"I don't know."

Ji Lingfeng loudly said:"Because he...he loves to kill and adores death. He loves to see the lives of others destroyed at his hands. The more tragic you die the happier he will be."

Yu Peiyu was flabbergasted by this abnormal home. Wife hating husband, husband afraid of daughter and daughter despising father.

Ji Lingfeng said:"You don't have to believe me. Why should you?"

Yu Peiyu said:"It is not that I don't believe you, but I saw your..him taking the effort of burying a cat. So I think he cannot be that bad."

Ji Lingfeng smiled coldly:"He killed the cat."

Yu Peiyu exclaimed in surprise:"He did?"

Ji Lingfeng said:"He loves to destroy things, no matter it is a cat, dog, a flower, a tree and even humans. He cannot stand other beings alive."

Ji Lingfeng said:"You can dig up a hole anywhere you want, you'll bound to find a skeleton of some animal or man."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I just want to leave this place." and sat down on the bed.

Ji Lingfeng said:"If you want to live you will have to listen to me. If not you're free to go as you please."

After she said this she opened the door. Ji Lingfeng said:"Ji Zanghua won't dare to come in here. I have some hold over him and with that I can protect you."

Yu Peiyu asked:"You're willing to protect me?"

Ji Lingfeng said:"With me around no one will be able to harm you."

Yu Peiyu said:"You're right! This is the safest place at this moment. But I rather risk my life than beg for help."

He stood up and walked to the door.

Ji Lingfeng said:"Do you really want to die?"

Yu Peiyu didn't answer her and kept walking.

She continued:"There is no other way for you. Why are you so keen on being a hero?"

Yu Peiyu turned around and said:"Thanks for your concern. I will choose my own roads."

Ji Lingfeng scoffed:"Go ahead! I don't give a toss about your life."

Although she said that she looked at him completely dazzled.

After resting for a half day he felt recharged. Also the reason why he could get better this fast had to do with the Lesser Return Pill of Kunlun.

Yu Peiyu felt that only old man Gao can be trusted and he is trying to find the way to his cottage.

However walking around some time he still couldn't find it but wandered to the small pavilion.

The pavilion has collapsed now thanks to him.

Suddenly it dawned to him he would try the secret passage. Perhaps that would lead to safety.

It was pitch dark in the tunnel, Yu Peiyu stretched out his hands to feel the way ahead. Suddenly he touched someone in front of him.

He could feel that this person was wearing a robe made from linen. He asked:"Who are you?"

The person didn't move and didn't speak.

Yu Peiyu was sweating and asked again:"Who are you? Why are you hiding here?"

The figure didn't speak, Yu Peiyu was moving around the figure and was using his hands to touch around and fortunately he found a lamp.

He quickly lit the lamp.

Yu Peiyu saw an old man sitting cross-legged on a pillow. His hair and beard were white but he did look a bit like Ji Zanghua.

Yu Peiyu said: "Are you the father of Ji Zanghua? Weren't you dead?"

The old man didn't move even his hair and beard were motionless. It was very eerie.

Yu Peiyu walked up and touched him again and realised it was a wax statue.

Yu Peiyu laughed and was also curious: "This must be the wax statue of Ji Zanghua's father. But why is it here?"

There was also a bed and a small bookcase, these were just ordinary furniture but somehow it seemed out of place in this secret hiding-place.

Yu Peiyu thought about this for some time and finally it dawned to him. Old Mr. Ji must have been forced to retire. And announced he was going to repent in the above small pavilion. But he secretly constructed this tunnel to hide and he would put the wax statue on his place above. And everyone will believe he was sincerely repenting.

Yu Peiyu laughed when he figured this out.

He took a look at the books on the case and glanced through them. They weren't martial arts manuals. They were just some love poems written by a woman.

He put the books back and saw a pouch on the bed. He opened it and found a piece of ancient jade in it. There were characters carved on it [Xiantian Wuji] and the character [Yu].

Yu Peiyu recognized the jade and knew only members of his Yu family had this kind of jade.

He found a piece of family treasure in this secret place. He was very puzzled and looked at the pouch. There was an image of a beautiful woman embroidered on it.

The woman was Madame Ji and the characters next to her were:

Always at your side, never leaving never stop hoping.

Yours Meiniang

Meiniang was obviously the name of Madame Ji.

Yu Peiyu began to understand, he remembered the hate Madame Ji had against people with the family name Yu.

She must have had a lover with the family name Yu. This man came here probably to escape from his pursuers and Madame Ji hid him in the secret hideout of her dead father-in-law.

She must have fallen in love with this man or knew him before she married Ji Zanghua.

Anyhow this lover must have left her and causing her to be grief-stricken with sorrow and eventually lead to her present mental state.

Yu Peiyu thought if the lover left he must have left via another secret exit. Perhaps it was here.

He continued his walk down the tunnel. After walking for a very long time he finally saw some light shining through the ceiling of the tunnel.

He was very happy and pushed against the stone tile and climbed up.

As soon as he climbed up someone grabbed him and shouted: "You have returned! I knew you would come back to me."

Yu Peiyu saw that it was Madame Ji who grabbed him and he was back in her room.

She was crying and said: "How could you leave all those years ago? I waited and waited how I hated you for leaving without a word. But now you've returned I will forgive you."

Yu Peiyu knew that Madame Ji must have mistaken him for her long lost lover. He sighed: "Madame Ji, you're mistaken. I'm not the man you have waited for. Please let me go."

Madame Ji was crying and laughing: "I will never let you go. If I release you, you'll leave me again like all those years ago. I will never, never let you out of my sight."

Yu Peiyu didn't know what to do with this predicament and saw that Ji Lingfeng was here too. He happily said: "Miss Ji please explain to your mother who I am."

Ji Lingfeng watched him coldly and laughed: "I know who you are. You're the man my mother has waited for all these years."

Yu Peiyu yelled: "Why do you make of fun of me too!"

Ji Lingfeng smiled lightly: "You have kept my mother waiting for all these years. You should make her happy."

Yu Peiyu couldn't break free from the strong grip of Madame Ji.

She pushed him on her bed and said lovely: "How are you doing? Do you realise how much I have longed for you?"

Yu Peiyu stuttered: "I...I..."

Madame Ji said: "I know you must be tired. I'm so happy that we are reunited. I'm so happy...Lingfeng bring us some wine. I want to celebrate."

Ji Lingfeng did as she was told and brought back a bottle of wine and 2 jade cups.

Madame Ji picked one cup and brought it to his lips and smiled tenderly: "I have never been this happy in a long time. You must drink up."

Yu Peiyu saw that she was very pretty and looked happy. He also knew that he couldn't explain this to her and the best thing to do is wait and see. He drank the wine.

Madame Ji continued:"Do you remember the first time we drank together. You told me you would never leave me. Do you remember?"

Yu Peiyu smiled awkwardly:"I...I.."

Madame Ji said:"Although you lied to me then, but now you cannot lie to me anymore. At least now that you have drunk this cup of wine."

Yu Peiyu was startled when he heard this and suddenly felt weak and dizzy.

He cried out:"Poison....wine.."

Madame Ji smiled:"This is called the Heart-broken wine. After drinking it you can never leave me again."

Yu Peiyu said:"I'm not,....I am not...."

Before he could finish he passed out already.

Madame Ji stopped laughing and touched Yu Peiyu's hair and face and softly mumbled:"I

remember the first time he climbed out that secret tunnel. I was just changing my clothes and saw him. He was standing there looking at me, smiling. Although I was shocked and angry at first but when I looked at his handsome face and those beautiful eyes. I was....I was. I couldn't attack him."

She was reminiscing about the past.

Ji Lingfeng asked her:"You must be very lonely then?"

Madame Ji said:"I was very lonely, married to a man like Ji Zanghua. How can a woman not feel lonely? Because of loneliness I fell for him."

Ji Lingfeng said:"Well, he was quite good to you."

Madame Ji smiled charmingly:"He is. He gave some of the sweetest moments in my life. Just the sheer memory is

enough to lighten up my day."

Ji Lingfeng continued:"Because you were too happy. And when he left you, you were even feeling more miserable."

Madame Ji said:

"Yes...yes...but now I don't hate him anymore. He is mine, totally mine and nobody can steal him away from me anymore."

Ji Lingfeng said coldly:"Unfortunately you have killed the wrong man. This man is not the man you have waited for."

Madame Ji screamed:"You're lying! Besides him who knows this secret tunnel!"

Ji Lingfeng said:"That man knew this secret, although it was a secret he could still figure it out. This man could too, because they are both members of the Yu family and have studied the art of secrets and formations."

Madame Ji shouted:"Shut up! Shut up!"

Ji Lingfeng continued:"You know as well as I do that this man isn't [him]. But you just like to fool yourself and keep living in a dream."

Madame Ji began crying:"Why did you have to destroy my dream? Why? Why?"

Ji Lingfeng said:"You brought us into this world of darkness and unhappiness. Because of you Lingyan has become mad. And I...and I hate you."

After saying this tears welled up in her eyes.

Madame Ji dragged Yu Peiyu off her bed and shouted:"You're not him! You're not him!"

Ji Lingfeng opened the door and yelled:"Yu Peiyu is dead now. Come and watch!"

A group of people immediately ran over. The first man to arrive was Baihe, he took Yu Peiyu's pulse and said to the others:"He is dead!"

A Diancang disciple regretfully said:"It's a shame that we couldn't kill him ourselves."

Baihe said:"Although I cannot kill him. I will cut up his body."

He drew his sword and wanted to hack at Yu Peiyu's body.

Suddenly everyone heard a Ping and Baihe dropped his sword. He turned around and saw Ji Zanghua smiling.

Baihe asked him:"Benefactor Ji, why did you do that?"

Ji Zanghua said calmly:"A Taoist priest should know when to stop. Cutting up a body is not befitting for a true cultivated priest."

Baihe was stunned by his remark and scoffed:"Since when did benefactor Ji become this caring?"

Ji Zanghua was angered now and said:"When wasn't I kind and caring?"

Baihe thought this midget is the lord of Murder Manor. How can he claim to be benevolent. But Baihe was afraid of him and his martial arts and didn't want to offend him.

Baihe apologized:"Benefactor Ji, forgive me. It is just that Yu Peiyu has committed an unforgivable crime and we're just not satisfied that he died this easy."

Ji Zanghua said:"No matter what he did, it is over now. He is dead. We should respect the dead."

Baihe couldn't retort this argument and said:"Since he is dead already why do you still..."

Ji Zanghua said seriously:"This is my manor, dead people are my true guests. If he was alive you're free to do what you please. But now he is my guest and my responsibility is to take care of him."

Baihe said:"So be it. We will take our leave now. We will take the body back with

us. Although he killed our master but still he is a disciple of the Kunlun School. Anyway, thank you for your hospitality."

Ji Zanghua said:"I don't care whether he was a Kunlun disciple or a Huashan disciple when he was alive. His body now belongs to me. Whoever wants to take him away will have to defeat me first."

Ji Zanghua stood there ready to fight anyone who would dare to take this body away. The disciples of Kunlun and Diancang looked at each other and were lost what to do. Baihe sighed:"Anyway Yu Peiyu is dead! We have avenged our teacher. Let us comply to the wishes of lord Ji."

Ji Zanghua quickly picked up the corpse of Yu Peiyu and ran off.

Ji Lingfeng stood there observing the entire situation with a cold shoulder. It seems she expected things would turn out this way.

Baihe wanted to say something but Ji Zanghua was gone already.

Baihe stamped his feet and said angrily:"Everyone in this manor is a complete idiot! Let us quickly go and put a distance between us and this accursed place."

Ji Zanghua changed the clothes of Yu Peiyu and washed away the dirt on his face. He carried him to the the courtyard with utmost care. He used a shovel to dig a hole and mumbled:"Poor child! Dying at such a young age. It is a pity you didn't listen to my advice otherwise you wouldn't have died at the hands of that witch."

Suddenly someone said:"If he listened to you he would suffer even more."

Ji Zanghua turned around and saw Ji Lingfeng and jumped up again:"What are you doing here? Won't you leave me alone?"

Ji Lingfeng said lightly:"He is dead already, leave him alone."

Ji Zanghua said:"I am giving him a good place where he can be alone."

Ji Lingfeng scoffed:"People buried by you always come back to haunt you."

Ji Zanghua angrily said:"How dare you talk to me in this way? Even though I am not your father you should still respect me. Do you really think I am afraid of you? Get lost now! Before I burry alongside this man."

Ji Lingfeng was not impressed and said:"You would actually dare to touch me.....Have you forgotten when grandfather died he told me lots of secrets. And one of those secrets is your worse nightmare."

Ji Zanghua became scared now and asked:"What is it that you want?"

Ji Lingfeng said:"I want this body, don't touch him again."

Ji Zanghua laughed:"Since when did you begin to like corpses. Could it be that you and I are alike. Of course, your family name is Ji too."

After saying this he walked away.

Ji Lingfeng picked up Yu Peiyu and said softly:"Everyone thinks you're dead. But sometimes people come back from the dead."

Ji Lingfeng brought the body of Yu Peiyu to the ancestral tomb house of the Ji family.

He was put on the ground, after some time Yu Peiyu's body began to move.

He woke up and sat up he saw he was in the ancestral tomb house of the Ji family and shivered.

He suddenly saw someone sitting in front of him. He thought it was a wax statue but when he blew the hairs of this man moved.

Yu Peiyu moved towards the man and took his pulse, it was a dead man, a corpse.

He looked around and some more of these corpses. He dawned to him the ancestors of the Ji family weren't buried or cremated but stuffed.

Yu Peiyu was terrified to learn this macabre custom.

Yu Peiyu got goosebumps all over when he saw these bodies. All these bodies sat in armchairs and they looked like they were watching Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu wanted to get out of here as quickly as possible and swiftly tried to find the exit.

He walked pass a few bodies when he suddenly saw the father of Ji Zanghua.

Suddenly the corpse next to old Mr. Ji got up and said:"You are here too."

Yu Peiyu was scared stiff he saw that this corpse wore a long white robe and had a white cloth covering his face.

The corpse walked towards Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu backed and backed and stuttered:"You....you..."

He was so terrified to say another word,
the body suddenly said:"Don't be afraid I'm not a ghost."

Yu Peiyu somewhat assured by this
stammered:"Who...who..are you?"

The body thought for a minute and laughed:"I am Yu Peiyu."

Yu Peiyu said completely scared stiff:"If you're Yu Peiyu. Who am I?"

The body removed the cloth from his face, the face had some healed wounds on it.

Yu Peiyu exclaimed with utmost surprise:"It is you, master Xie of Diancang!"

The real Xie Tianbi was also in the house of death. This was indeed the shock of his life.

Xie Tianbi laughed tragically:"Yes I am Xie Tianbi. Never thought you would recognize me."

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly:"Master Xie, you gave me a true scare just a moment ago."

Xie Tianbi smiled apologetically:"I am very sorry. I was just locked up here for days and when I saw you I was so happy that I decided to play a little joke on you."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Master Xie, I think you wanted to see whether I was really Yu Peiyu. By watching my reaction to your words you could see whether I was real or an imposter."

Xie Tianbi sighed:"I think at the moment only you can understand my feelings. And only I will believe and understand your problems."

Yu Peiyu was a bit saddened and asked:"Master Xie, are you too..."

Xie Tianbi sighed:"Although I believe you now. It will be of little help to either of us. I am afraid we will never see another sunrise again."

Yu Peiyu asked:"But how come you're here."

Xie Tianbi said:"That day, after the ceremony at the gathering, I drank a bit too much wine and was feeling woozy. I returned to my tent to rest after a few hours someone woke me. And asked me who I was."

Yu Peiyu was puzzled and said:"He entered your tent and asked Master Xie who you were. That is strange."

Xie Tianbi said:"At that time I was annoyed and got up and saw that this man looked exactly like me. I was too surprised to talk. It was like looking into a mirror."

Yu Peiyu said angrily:"It was that bastard."

Xie Tianbi said:"I looked at him and he looked at me. He said [I am the leader of the Diancang School Xie Tianbi. Why are you sleeping in my bed.]

I was still feeling woozy at the time and yelled out [You're Xie Tianbi? Who am I?]"

Yu Peiyu said:" Master Xie's experience earlier gave you the idea to test me, right?"

Xie Tianbi said:" Exactly, when that fiend heard my reaction he scolded me and said I was an imposter. And wanted to fight with me using Diancang martial arts. The loser would be the imposter and the winner the real Xie Tianbi."

Yu Peiyu said:" That fellow cannot be your match."

Xie Tianbi sighed:" That man was very good and I was drunk that night and I think they even put a sleeping potion in my wine. After 3 stances he knocked my sword out of my hand and he used orthodox Diancang swordsplay."

Yu Peiyu said:" Were you driven away just like that?"

Xie Tianbi continued:" At that moment chancel...Yu....Yu Fanghe, Wang Yuluo and others entered the tent. They were near my tent all the time and deployed all the Diancang disciples to different locations..."

Yu Peiyu asked:" Master Xie, I think you weren't aware that they were imposters too."

Xie Tianbi said:" I never would have dreamt that they would be imposters too. However at that time I was happy when the chancellor appeared. Before I could speak all of them accused me of being a fake."

Xie Tianbi now held Yu Peiyu's arm and said:" Then I realised how it felt like being wrongfully accused of something. I felt like exploding but couldn't resist and was tied up and thrown on a carriage."

Yu Peiyu said:" Was Yu...that Yu character also on the carriage?"

Xie Tianbi said:" He wasn't, but his henchmen had orders to take me to a remote place and kill me."

Yu Peiyu said:" In that case master Xie, you were lucky to have escaped."

Xie Tianbi said:"If they weren't too cautious I wouldn't be here now."

Yu Peiyu asked:"What do you mean?"

Xie Tianbi explained:"If they had killed me somewhere remote I would be dead now. But they were afraid someone would find my corpse so they brought me to Murder Manor. Everyone knows that bodies disappear very easily here in Murder Manor."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"The people here do kill very easily."

He waited for Xie Tianbi to continue but Xie didn't say a word anymore.

Yu Peiyu said:"It seems you're still not completely healed from your wounds. I bet those henchmen had something to do with your injuries."

Xie Tianbi said:"You're right."

Yu Peiyu asked:"If I may ask, master Xie. How did you escape death in the end?"

Xie Tianbi said:"This involves a third person without this person's consent I cannot reveal his identity."

He asked Yu Peiyu:"But why are you here?"

Yu Peiyu looked sadly and said:"I am a dead man now. And someone put me here."

Xie Tianbi said in surprise:"Dead man? Could it be..."

A voice coldly said:"Yes, you have died once and have returned from the dead."

The speaker is Ji Lingfeng.

Xie Tianbi was dazzled by her beautiful appearance and smiled:"Miss, what do you mean? How can dead people be brought back to life?"

She said calmly:"I brought him back to life."

Her voice was calm and mysterious. It really seemed that she had that ability.

Xie Tianbi and Yu Peiyu looked at each other and didn't speak.

Ji Lingfeng walked up to the corpse of Ji Zanghua's father and knelt down and kowtowed 3 times.

She said:"You must be wondering why I only pay respects to him only. He save my life once and if I wasn't saved, you two would be dead now."

Yu Peiyu and Xie Tianbi were silent.

Ji Lingfeng turned to Xie Tianbi and said:"You were almost dead, they were ready to give you the final blow. But I tricked them into believing you already died. I lured them away from you and saved you."

Xie Tianbi said:"I am forever in your debt, Miss."

Ji Lingfeng scoffed:"You must feel embarrassed that you, the leader of a prominent Wulin school was saved by a unknown girl. Is that the reason why you didn't reveal who saved you?"

Xie Tianbi laughed wryly:"Miss, you're mistaken. I just...."

Ji Lingfeng rudely interrupted him:"I am a very petty woman. If I saved someone I want that person to be in my debt and remember me forever. If not I will personally kill him. Never forget this."

Volume 2 - So Near Yet So Far

Chapter 6 : Mysteries Of Life And Death

Ji Lingfeng shook her head and said:"Do you know what the worst thing is that could happen to a woman? Being deserted by her lover. If she found out that he died the pain would hurt but it will pass. But the pain of losing him to another woman is too great to bear."

Yu Peiyu said:"So if she found out that Mr. Yu is dead, she would be happier?"

Xie Tianbi couldn't retort back and didn't say anything anymore. Ji Lingfeng turned her attention to Yu Peiyu and said:"You were dead and your enemies examined your body. I, however brought you back to life you must be wondering how I did that."

Yu Peiyu said:"I think the answer must lie in that cup of wine."

Ji Lingfeng coldly smiled:"Although you're not the most intelligent man on the world. At least you're not too stupid. You didn't drink the Heart-broken Wine but you drank from the Wine of Escapism."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"A very interesting name."

Ji Lingfeng said:"It is said that the winegrower of this fine beverage was a very talented man. However three women fell in love with him and he couldn't deal with any of them anymore so he created this wine. Anyone who drinks of it will stop breathing and his limbs will turn cold. After two days the drinker will automatically wake up. He used this wine to escape from those three women and lived happily after without any disturbance. It was even said that at his deathbed he was so proud of himself for creating this special drink he wrote a short poem.

With the name Escapism I name this wine, with it I roamed and toured the realm with freedom.

Even till now this is a rather famous anecdote."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Never thought the amorous escapades of a winegrower would save my life."

Ji Lingfeng said coldly:"Do not forget I saved you not the wine."

Yu Peiyu said with a smile:"I will never forget that, Miss."

Ji Lingfeng stared at him and said:"Do you know why I saved you?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I was about to ask you."

Ji Lingfeng said:"If you think I am in love with you and I save because of this. You are very wrong. I am not that sort of woman."

Yu Peiyu blushed when he heard this.

She continued:"The reason why I saved you is similar to why I saved Xie Tianbi. I want you to be in my debt too."

She suddenly asked Xie Tianbi and Yu Peiyu:"Do you know who this man is?"

She pointed at the body of Ji Zanghua's father.

Yu Peiyu answered:"He was the father of Ji Zanghua."

Ji Lingfeng said:"You're right. His name is Ji Kuqing. The reason why I respect him isn't because he is my grandfather and not because he cured my deadly illness. I respect him because of his wisdom...

He predicted that a great calamity would fall upon Wulin and only I am destined to face that calamity."

Suddenly she said with passion:"I shall lead Wulin, this generation will belong to me. YOU BELONG TO ME! You will help me accomplish my dream. I saved you and you should prepare to die for me and my cause at any time."

Yu Peiyu and Xie Tianbi were scared stiff that a young woman not even 20 years old would have the ambition to rule Wulin.

She took out a small bottle and said:"There are two pills in here, each of you will take one. After eating this pill you'll become two new humans. No one will remember who you were and you won't remember your past. The only two main things you will not forget are serving me and your lifes were given by me."

Xie Tianbi's face changed and said:"If we refuse?"

Ji Lingfeng smiled evilly:"Don't forget I gave back your life. And I can take it away at any time."

She walked tho steps in their direction and Xie Tianbi and Yu Peiyu backed away with two steps.

All of a sudden a voice arrogantly shouted:"Little witch! You will die soon and yet you want the lives of others!"

The voice sounded maniacally evil.

Yu Peiyu exclaimed:"Ji Zanghua!"

Ji Lingfeng quickly passed by him and Yu Peiyu followed. She locked the door.

Ji Zanghua was still laughing maniacally:"Little witch! Do you really think everyone is afraid of this place! Do you really think I didn't see through your intentions? You negligence will cost you your life!"

Ji Lingfeng's cold face was begin to show signs of fear, she knew if the bolt outside was secured it was impossible to get out.

Ji Zanghua laughed:"You should know that nobody leaves the House of Death alive! I deliberately told you the secret of the house hoping to catch you in it some day. Finally that day has arrived!"

After saying this he left and his mad laughter died out.

Ji Lingfeng was crying not because she was afraid of dying. But she was sad that her ambition to dominating Wulin will never be fulfilled.

Yu Peiyu and Xie Tianbi were stunned too at the current situation.

Ji Lingfeng stood there in a daze, after some time she walked to an empty chair and sat down.

She too began to laugh frantically: "At least I won't be lonely. There are so many people here to keep my company."

Xie Tianbi said: "Miss Ji, are we just going to wait for death?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "Waiting slowly for death. I think that is quite amusing."

Xie Tianbi said: "Aren't you even going to try to escape?"

Ji Lingfeng laughed: "The door is locked from the outside."

Xie Tianbi said: "Isn't there a different way?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "There isn't."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What about the men who carry the bodies into this house?"

Ji Lingfeng smiled evilly: "No one carries the bodies in here. They walk into this place and wait to die."

Xie Tianbi said: "Are you joking?" But he shivered at the thought of being trapped here.

Ji Lingfeng said: "I don't like to joke and especially not in moments like these."

Xie Tianbi said: "Even so, someone must come in and stuff these bodies."

He was still shivering after saying this.

Ji Lingfeng calmly said: "Before they want to die they will take several different kinds of poison. These different types of poison mixed together will slow down their deaths and preserve their bodies. When they feel that the poison is about to kick in they walk to this house and sit in these stone chairs and wait for death. Also they enjoy watching when their limbs turn stiff and the poison slowly begins to take effect. They just adore death."

Xie Tianbi was too scared to say anything anymore.

The house was filled with evil to them. Yu

Peiyu said:"No wonder Madame Ji said every Ji was crazy."

Ji Lingfeng said:"Because of this special poison these bodies will never rot."

She turned to Xie Tianbi and asked:"Now, do you understand."

Xie Tianbi trembled and said:"They burry themselves...."

Ji Lingfeng said:"Our situation is very similar to theirs we just have to wait."

She looked at Ji Kuqing and said calmly:"I remember when it was his time everyone went to see him off. He turned around and smiled to us. Probably he was thinking that we will never understand the joy of dying."

Xie Tianbi didn't want to hear anymore of these stories.

Ji Lingfeng continued:"When he turned around he also said [Someday you will find out that living doesn't mean happier. Death can also be very joyful]. His face was starting to stiffen and his jaws couldn't move anymore but he was still laughing. I was so scared that I cried for days."

Ji Lingfeng loves to torture people and play mind games with them. If other people are suffering she will be very happy. If you don't want to hear something she will make you hear it lots of times.

Xie Tianbi was totally of the world when he heard her story. He didn't move or say a word for a long time. Suddenly he began laughing very loudly.

He didn't stop laughing.

Yu Peiyu called:"Master Xie! Master Xie! What is wrong?"

Xie Tianbi didn't answer he just laughed.

Yu Peiyu shook him a few times but in vain he couldn't stop laughing anymore.

Yu Peiyu slapped him on the face and then he stopped laughing and started crying.

Ji Lingfeng said calmly:"He has gone mad. Good! At least he doesn't have to stay sane and suffer that much..."

Yu Peiyu walked to her and faced her and said seriously:"You have saved my life once, but now all of us are facing death. So in other words I have returned my life back to you. There are no grudges and no debts anymore between us. But if you keep provoking him I will not be friendly anymore!"

Ji Lingfeng stared at him for a moment and turned her head away.

Yu Peiyu used his sleeve to wipe his sweat on his face. It was becoming very warm in here.

Ji Lingfeng suddenly called out:"Fire! The madman is trying to burn us to death."

Smoke was coming in through the ceiling.

Ji Lingfeng said:"He must feel that we are dying to slowly."

At this moment Xie Tianbi softly said:"That is strange....that is strange...."

Nobody paid any attention to him, Ji Lingfeng has accepted her faith. Yu Peiyu was looking about hoping to find a way out.

Xie Tianbi walked towards the body of Ji Kuqing and laughed:"Come look at this! It is very strange! Even a dead man is sweating!" He continued his mad laughter.

Yu Peiyu was sighing and thought it was sad that the leader of the Diancang School would become like this.

Yu Peiyu walked over and took a look at Ji Kuqing and saw that he was sweating.

Ji Lingfeng shouted:"He....he is...is real really sweating...."

Xie Tianbi laughed:"I think this dead man is afraid too."

Yu Peiyu leapt up and yelled:"Of course a wax statue!"

Yu Peiyu pulled the head and it fell off.

Ji Lingfeng said:"Impossible I saw him enter this house. But where did he go and why did he put a wax statue in his place?"

Yu Peiyu knew that Ji Kuqing must have fooled everyone else and cheated death. So there must be an exit.

He felt confident he could find it. Being a disciple of the Xiantian Wuji School he was an expert in secrets and formations.

Yu Peiyu examined every little corner in the house but couldn't find anything unusual.

Ji Lingfeng said suddenly:"Perhaps there isn't a secret tunnel. It could be that someone opened the door for him."

Yu Peiyu's hope sank away and thought that she might be right.

Xie Tianbi was mumbling and suddenly loudly screamed:"The dead man is gone! Where did he go?"

Yu Peiyu took a glance and saw that the statue of Ji Kuqing had melted but the wax on the floor was not much. Where did the remaining wax go?

Yu Peiyu knelt down and happily said:"Just as I thought there is a secret."

On the stone armchair there was a little hole all the wax went through that hole.

Ji Lingfeng coldly said:"If there is a secret passage beneath this stone chair and if Ji Kuqing left through that passage. How could he have placed the statue on the chair?"

Yu Peiyu said:"That is the clever part of Ji Kuqing's plan. If someone would discover this body was just a statue they still wouldn't know how he escaped."

Ji Lingfeng asked:"How do you explain this?"

Yu Peiyu answered:"The little hole here is the answer. Ji Kuqing attached a string to the bottom of this statue. He went through the secret passage and held on to the string. When he closed the passage he pulled the string and the statue was hoisted up the stone chair."

Ji Lingfeng exclaimed:"Ingenious!"

Yu Peiyu said:"Ji Kuqing thought of everything, except for the fact that years later his son would set fire to this house."

Ji Lingfeng remained silent for awhile and finally she sighed:"You're smarter than I anticipated. Much smarter!"

Yu Peiyu pushed away the stone chair and saw there was indeed a secret tunnel.

Ji Lingfeng walked down and Yu Peiyu helped Xie Tianbi go down the tunnel too.

It was pitch dark and they couldn't see a thing. After walking for some time they saw a light up ahead.

Yu Peiyu quickly advanced forward to see where the light came from. It was a lamp the same lamp he used earlier.

That meant if they went up now they would arrive in the room of Madame Ji.

They have walked around in a circle.

Everyone was quiet again and sad. Suddenly Yu Peiyu said:"There must be another exit."

Ji Lingfeng asked:"How come?"

Yu Peiyu explained:"Ji Kuqing and that Mr. Yu (the lover of Madame Ji) couldn't have left via Madame Ji's room or the pavilion. So there must be another exit around here somewhere."

Yu Peiyu took the lamp and lead the way, they walked the path leading to the exit via the pavilion. Yu Peiyu asked Ji Lingfeng:"When did that Mr. Yu come to the manor?"

Ji Lingfeng replied:"I remember very clearly. It was the third day of the first month of the lunar year.

It was also the third day which Ji Kuqing took the poison. He took the poison on New Year's Day he wanted everyone to be sad on a joyous holiday. After that everyone was busy preparing to see him off and that's when that Yu fellow disappeared."

They arrived in the little room with the bed and the bookcase. The statue of Ji Kuqing was still there and that piece of jade was still on the bed.

Xie Tianbi laughed:"No wonder that dead man wasn't there, he sneaked out here."

Yu Peiyu said:"I think Madame Ji has wrongfully accused that Mr. Yu."

Ji Lingfeng asked:"Why do you say that?"

Yu Peiyu said:"When I take a look at this piece of jade I just feel suspicious. Even if he didn't give a toss for that pouch he wouldn't leave such a precious object behind."

Ji Lingfeng said:"Right, it seems that this jade is a family heirloom. But he could have lost it in a hurry."

Yu Peiyu said:"Why should he leave in a hurry? He found out about a fourth exit and nobody knew about his whereabouts. So why the hurry of leaving?

Unless he didn't leave on his own will."

Ji Lingfeng exclaimed:"You mean he was found by Ji Kuqing?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Very likely. Ji Kuqing entered the secret passage and discovered another man here. He couldn't let others know about his secret."

Ji Lingfeng added:"So that Yu fellow must have been taken away by force or even killed."

Yu Peiyu said:"Most likely he is dead now."

Ji Lingfeng said sadly:" If my mother knew this she wouldn't be that sad."

Yu Peiyu said:" But if she knew that the man she loves is dead wouldn't that shock be bigger."

Ji Lingfeng shook her head and said:" Do you know what the worst thing is that could happen to a woman? Being deserted by her lover. If she found out that he died the pain would hurt but it will pass. But the pain of losing him to another woman is too great to bear."

Yu Peiyu said:" So if she found out that Mr. Yu is dead, she would be happier?"

Ji Lingfeng said:" Much happier than now."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said:" I will never understand how women think."

Ji Lingfeng coldly said:" Men just shouldn't try to understand women. They should just respect them and love them."

Yu Peiyu didn't answer and took the lamp and was searching for the fourth exit.

After looking for awhile Yu Peiyu sighed:" I just cannot find anything in this darkness."

Ji Lingfeng said:" You don't have to look for the fourth exit."

Yu Peiyu asked:" Why do you say that?"

Ji Lingfeng said:" If you just told my mother that her lover is dead. She will not hate you anymore and even let you go."

Yu Peiyu didn't answer, but another voice said:" No, this plan will not work."

Ji Lingfeng asked:" Why will it not work."

The voice replied:" Because Yu Peiyu is dead, how can he walk out alive."

Ji Lingfeng now realise the speaker wasn't Yu Peiyu and certainly not Xie Tianbi.

Ji Lingfeng loudly said:" Who are you?"

The voice said:"Don't you recognize me anymore?"

A light shone on the figure they saw an old face standing in front of them. Both Yu Peiyu and Ji Lingfeng exclaimed:"Old man Gao!"

Old man Gao smiled at Ji Lingfeng mysteriously and said:"Of course an old servant shouldn't even be here. You know me as old man Gao. But do you also realise who I really am?"

Ji Lingfeng now noticed that the eyes of this old man were very sharp and brilliant. She was a bit afraid and backed away with one step and asked:"Who are you?"

Old man Gao answered:"I am the man who caused Ji Kuqing to sleep uncomfortable and to eat uneasy. I am the man who caused him to repent..."

Yu Peiyu interrupted and said:"You were the one who forced him to retire. He was afraid of you?"

Old man Gao laughed:"Never thought he would be afraid of an old fool like me."

Ji Lingfeng was surprised and shocked and asked:"All this time he knew who you were?"

Old man Gao said:"Of course he knew. But he didn't say anything and pretended not to know. Because I knew of his big secret."

Ji Lingfeng was puzzled and asked:"What secret is that?"

Old man Gao said:"More than 20 years ago, many people were murdered in Wulin. Also lots of precious goods were stolen too.

The perpetrator was highly skilled in martial arts and was very cunning. Several top martial artists investigated these crimes but in vain. Nobody suspected the perpetrator would be Ji Kuqing, who retired years ago and repented for his crimes."

Yu Peiyu said:"I knew there was something behind all of these secrets of Ji Kuqing."

Ji Lingfeng said:"I don't believe he committed those crimes."

Old man Gao sighed:"You're not the only one who doesn't believe it. I think not many people will believe me when I say this. The reason why I came to Murder Manor was to investigate this matter."

Ji Lingfeng said:"If so why did Ji Kuqing allow you to stay in the manor?"

Old man Gao said:"If he didn't allow me to stay it would mean he was afraid that his secret would leak out. And if he tried to kill me, that meant I was right on his trail. He was a very cautious man and didn't take any chances. He knew I was spying on him and he didn't care. Fortunately he didn't, otherwise I could have stayed here all these years."

Old man Gao sighed:"Ji Kuqing is a very clever man with one look he's able to see through you. When I arrived here I also knew that I can never solve those crimes and find any evidence to support my suspicions. But even so my presence made sure he wouldn't commit anymore crimes."

Yu Peiyu was filled with admiration and respect for old man Gao and said:"Mr. Gao, you have taken effort to protect Wulin. Not only did you sacrifice your own life but also your fame and status to becoming a lowly servant here."

Old man Gao looked a bit sad when he heard this, these past ten odd years were not easy to pass.

Old man Gao said:"Although I sacrificed a part of my life but I made sure that Wulin was safe from his terror for years."

Yu Peiyu said:"He couldn't kill Mr. Gao and couldn't escape. So he faked his death."

Old man Gao said:"I knew he had the ambition to dominate Wulin but I never thought he would fake his death and fool me too."

Ji Lingfeng said:"Since you found out his death was an act, why didn't you go and find him."

Old man Gao said:"At the beginning I thought he really died but after awhile I knew that he wouldn't let his dream die out. Also I...I never really had a home I roamed the realm and within realising I stayed here for years and saw you and your sister grow up. I don't have children or students of my own and watching you grow up..."

Ji Lingfeng interrupted him and coldly said:"I don't need your love, I don't care why you stayed here. I have nothing to do with you. Now that he's gone you will never find him."

Old man Gao said:"You're right if he keeps a low profile I won't be able to find him. However if he starts to wreak havoc again I will certainly be ready to stop him."

After saying that he looked very impressive and confident.

Ji Lingfeng asked again:"Who are you?"

Old man Gao smiled:"Since you're not willing to know me why bother to know my true identity."

Ji Lingfeng grunted but didn't say a word again.

Old man Gao turned to Yu Peiyu and said:"When I heard that you died I went to the room of Madame Ji to take a look. By coincidence I discovered the secret passage via the wardrobe."

Yu Peiyu said:"Now everybody thinks I am dead I can leave this place."

Old man Gao said:"But since you died how can you walk out of here alive."

Old man Gao glanced at the statue of Ji Kuqing."

Yu Peiyu understood his meaning, pretending to be dead he could continue his search for the truth.

Ji Lingfeng scoffed:"Unfortunately everyone knows the famous Yu Peiyu."

Old man Gao said:"Nobody is perfect in this world. Let us not talk about the personalities of men. But appearances there is no perfect face in the world. Even the most handsome

man or most beautiful woman throughout history didn't have a perfect face."

After saying this old man Gao looked at Yu Peiyu and continued:"Take you for example, you can be called one of the most handsome young men of your time. But your eyebrows are too thick, your eyes a bit too small. Your nose and mouth are not too matching either."

Yu Peiyu didn't understand what he was getting at and smiled wryly:"Mr. Gao, you must be joking how can I be considered a handsome young man."

Old man Gao said:"If the personality of a man is faulty no one can repair it. But inconsistencies on the face can be corrected. I have long examined to create the perfect face and I have finally found a method. However finding a suitable person to work with is very difficult, no matter what I cannot transform an ugly man into a handsome dashing young man."

He looked at Yu Peiyu:"Your manners and grandeur are superb even perfect. And those small inconsistencies can be helped by me. After searching for many years I have found the suitable person. You!"

Yu Peiyu was surprised and asked:"Mr. Gao, you want transform me into another man."

Old man Gao smiled:"There are lots of advantages of being the perfect handsome man. Women for example won't bear to harm you..."

Yu Peiyu quickly interrupted:"But I am very pleased with this face."

Old man Gao said:"The best advantage is nobody will know you are Yu Peiyu."

Yu Peiyu asked:"But won't such a perfect face draw too much unwanted attention?"

Old man Gao said:"Everybody will be impressed and in awe of your appearances. So they won't pay attention to your

manners and grandeur."

Yu Peiyu was silent for awhile and sighed:" Mr. Gao, I will comply."

Yu Peiyu looked at Xie Tianbi and saw him looking at the wax statue and talking softly to himself. Ji Lingfeng stood in a corner and couldn't care less.

Old man Gao went out and brought back food and water lots of candles and two mirrors.

Yu Peiyu was lying on the bed and old man Gao used a cloth to cover his face. Yu Peiyu could smell a very strong herbal aroma and his face felt numb.

During a daze he could hear old man Gao saying:"Just rest! When you wake up you will become the most handsome man throughout history."

Yu Peiyu woke up after a long sleep, his face was wrapped up with the cloth after seven days the cloth could be removed.

On the seventh day old man Gao removed the cloth and stared at the face of Yu Peiyu. He admired the face like a painter admiring his greatest work and felt very proud. He softly said to himself:"Who....who else in the realm can create such a perfect face. Of course the face alone isn't enough, but..."

He patted on Yu Peiyu' shoulder and smiled:" Luckily you had such a good father, a wonderful discipline and powerful will. Without it you wouldn't be able to match your manners and grandeur with this face. Also your strong will helped you staying sane through all these past events."

Ji Lingfeng said coldly:" I am very fortunate to have such a good-looking subject."

Old man Gao asked:" Who is your subject?"

Ji Lingfeng calmly said:" Yu Peiyu and you are my subjects. If you do not comply I will expose your secrets to everyone."

Old man Gao sighed:"Go ahead! Tell everyone! I don't care".

Ji Lingfeng was shocked to see this reaction and stammered:"You..you're not afraid?"

Old man Gao smiled:"You won't tell anyone, will you? You look and try to come over as evil. But you're a very kind and gentle girl in your heart. I know I watched when you were an infant."

Ji Lingfeng stood there and suddenly broke out in tears.

Old man Gao patted her on the shoulder and said:"Dear child, you think everything is that simple? Becoming evil is more difficult than you think. Sometimes being evil is more difficult than being good?"

Yu Peiyu wanted to touch his face, but old man Gao grabbed his hand and said:"Don't touch it for three days and don't use water."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Do I have to stay here another three days?"

Old man Gao laughed:"If you can't wait you can go now. I, for one am very eager to show you off to the world. Let the world know a new perfect handsome young man was brought to this world by me."

He pushed away the pillow and said:"Off you go now!"

Yu Peiyu was still uncertain and asked:"I can really go?"

Old man Gao smiled:"Yes, you can. And the best part nobody knows you're Yu Peiyu."

Yu Peiyu looked at Xie Tianbi, Xie Tianbi was saying softly:"The dead man is gone....he is gone now...he is sweating...."

Yu Peiyu sighed and took him by the hand and said:"Master Xie...."

Ji Lingfeng turned around and said:"He will stay here, I drove him mad and I will take care of him. In this manor nobody will know my secret and harm him."

Yu Peiyu was surprised and said:"You want to stay here?"

Ji Lingfeng coldly said:"Why? Am I not allowed to stay?"

Yu Peiyu said:"But Ji Zanghua..."

Ji Lingfeng coldly said:"If he sees that I didn't die he will be too shocked to do anything. From now on he will never be able to harm again. I am in control."

After she stopped weeping she became her cold self again. And she added:"Go now! Before I change my mind."

Old man Gao said:"You should go now. Women do change their minds a lot."

Yu Peiyu walked out the secret passage with a set of new clothes and a new hope.

After encountering the strange and eerie events in Murder Manor he felt almost every place must be ten times better than this spooky place.

He walked over to a small brooke and looked into the water. He saw a dashing young man and thought:Is that really me? Is that really Yu Peiyu?

Yu Peiyu walked around in the courtyard for some time he heard several men talking.

One said:"Murder Manor is said to be hell on earth. I think there is nothing special to that place."

The other said:"You don't know a thing. When you enter that place you can be killed at any time. You're here for the obsequies, that's why you find nothing special to this place."

A third man said:"Well I don't really care much for the obsequies. I just wanted to visit the famous Murder Manor."

Yu Peiyu's curiosity was aroused and walked over to them.

The three men walked into the hall and Yu Peiyu followed them. He could see a crowd in there.

One man said:"Although it wasn't a glorious death, but the funeral does seem impressive."

The other replied:"That is because of his father."

Yu Peiyu couldn't help patting the man on his shoulders and smiled:"May I ask who passed away?"

The man turned around and looked very annoyed but as soon as he saw Yu Peiyu's face his attitude changed. He smiled friendly and said:"Haven't you heard yet? The chancellor of Wulin organised this funeral."

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly:"Oh, it is him."

The man put up his thumb and praised:"Chancellor Yu is fit to lead Wulin. His only son died here but he doesn't even want to pursue the matter and even said[This unfilial son will only create more havoc if he is alive. But now that he is dead I still must organize a funeral worthy of him].

Everybody praised the benevolence and righteousness of chancellor Yu. Although this Yu Peiyu didn't die with honour but his funeral is something grand."

The man added:"I forgot to ask your name, good friend."

Yu Peiyu smiled lightly:"My name is Yu Peiyu."

The man was very surprised and said after awhile with a laugh:"People with the same names isn't unusual. But your grandeur is better than the late Yu Peiyu."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Well, perhaps not that much better."

During the conversations some people backed away now to make room. Yu Peiyu saw the famous Madame Hai Tang walking by.

She held the hand of a young girl with a veil. This young girl was crying very sadly. Yu Peiyu already knew who this girl was.

He couldn't help looking at this girl and Madame Hai Tang noticed. She smiled at Yu Peiyu.

Some people were whispering:"That is Lin Daiyu, she is the fiancée of Yu Peiyu. She already fainted three times."

Yu Peiyu wanted to go over and comfort her and tell her he isn't dead. But he also knew he couldn't.

Another man said:" Yu Peiyu has a wonderful father and a loving fiancée. If he only stayed on the right path...It is his own fault for..."

Before he could finish someone loudly scolded:" Yu Peiyu is my good friend. Whether he is good or bad, it is not your place to talk about him. If I hear another bad word about him I will not be friendly."

The speaker was Hong Lianhua.

Yu Peiyu was very sad and wanted to go over to them.

At this moment the chancellor of Wulin Yu Fanghe walked by and had tears in his eyes, of course.

When Yu Peiyu saw him he was about to explode. But no matter how he felt anger, sadness he couldn't let anyone know this Yu Peiyu and the "late" Yu Peiyu are the same man.

Everyone was rather pleased to see such a dashing young man and all people treated him with respect.

Even the lord of Murder Manor the wicked Ji Zanghua smiled at Yu Peiyu and said:" My dear friend, I do not recognize you. But I am very captivated by your elegance. Would you like to join me for a cup of wine in my manor?"

His words were sincere, and looked very amicably. Anyone else might have gone with him.

But Yu Peiyu knew better and friendly rejected:" Thanks lord Ji! But I wouldn't dare to impose."

Ji Zanghua smiled:" My friend, if you won't join me I will take that as an insult."

He took Yu Peiyu by his hand and walked with him.

Yu Peiyu felt disgusted that this madman was touching him.

Suddenly a girl walked over and said:" This young master already promised my mistress for a cup of wine later."

Her hand was aimed for Ji Zanghua acupoints on his arm with or without intentions.

Ji Zanghua had no choice but to let go.

He saw a young woman in a red dress staring at Yu Peiyu. She looked very naughty.

Ji Zanghua laughed: "You're very cheeky. Do you know who I am?"

The girl giggled: "Do you know who my mistress is?"

Ji Zanghua said: "I just wanted to ask you."

She blinker her eyes and said: "Well, my mistress is Madame Hai Tang."

Ji Zanghua was stunned and quickly turned around and walked the other way.

Yu Peiyu felt relieved that he was gone.

The girl laughed: "He wanted you to stay at his manor, do you know the reason?"

She stared at Yu Peiyu without blinking, Yu Peiyu blushed a little bit.

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I don't know."

The girl said: "He wants you to stay at his manor so that he can kill you. He has never killed anyone as handsome as you before. And I think he gets a thrill by killing handsome people over ugly ones."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Do you feel the same?"

The girl giggled: "Even I did I can never harm you. I wouldn't think of it."

She laughed and put a small note in Yu Peiyu's hands and walked away.

She turned around and said: "Silly boy! Don't you know yet the most gorgeous flower is the cherry blossom. And she is waiting for you."

Yu Peiyu could smell a sweet fragrance and it was similar to the fragrance of Madame Hai Tang.

The note said: *Around midnight outside Murder Manor, a gorgeous flower and a fine wine will be awaiting you. Will you join me?*

Chapter 7 : Madame Hai Tang

They heard a voice saying:"The flower isn't a flower. The fog isn't a fog. After being heart-broken the only thing that remains...."

The four men quickly left this place, Yu Peiyu loudly asked:"Is Madame Hai Tang here? Thank you for helping me."

Yu Peiyu went to meet Madame Hai Tang later on that night. When he arrived at the spot he saw Madame Hai Tang waiting for him. He looked around and didn't see anyone else. Yu Peiyu was a bit disappointed that Lin Daiyu wasn't here.

Madame Hai Tang smiled:"It is a lovely night. I am very fortunate to be in your company."

Yu Peiyu sat down and poured some wine and drank three cups. He laughed and said:"You're right, life is short we should enjoy wine and song. It is indeed a great honour to be in your company too, Madame Hai Tang."

Yu Peiyu wasn't really such a carefree man, but after all he had been through he is now much more mature and understands life and death better.

Madame Hai Tang stared at him and said:"Do you know that I am very interested in you?"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Interested in me?"

Madame Hai Tang gazed at him with her enchanting eyes and said:"Everything about you is a mystery. For example, who are you? Where are you from? And to which martial arts school do you belong?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I'm just a wanderer. Even I don't know the answers to your questions, Madame."

Madame Hai Tang smiled sweetly:"Seems to me that you've been through a lot. And that at such a young age."

Yu Peiyu said casually:"Some people have to endure so much in a month, that other people perhaps in a entire lifetime can not perceive."

Madame Hai Tang giggled:"Well said! But at least tell me your name."

Yu Peiyu said:"My name is Yu Peiyu."

Madame Hai Tang stopped laughing and asked again:"Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu asked:"Is there something wrong with this name? Something ominous?"

Madame Hai Tang smiled again:"I find it rather amusing...Yu Peiyu is attending the funeral of Yu Peiyu. Don't you think that is funny?"

She gazed at Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu calmly replied:"It is not uncommon to have the same name. A Yu Peiyu died, but there still another Yu Peiyu alive."

Madame Hai Tang asked:"Are you certain that you are not the same Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu answered:"Madame, do you think I am the spirit of the late Yu Peiyu?"

Madame Hai Tang smiled:"The first time I saw you, I did notice you were not from this world."

Yu Peiyu didn't answer.

Madame Hai Tang continued:"You came from nowhere, suddenly you just appeared. No one knows anything about you."

Yu Peiyu said:"You have been investigating me?"

Madame Hai Tang said sweetly:"No women in the realm can resist not to be interested in a man like you. And I am a woman."

Yu Peiyu laughed:"Madame, you are not just any woman. You're the woman amongst women, the fairy amongst the fairies."

Madame Hai Tang said:"But you are not interested in me. I walked by you and you didn't even look at me. Isn't that strange?"

Madame Hai Tang may look very innocent and weak but she is everything but those two things. Her every word has been full of suspicion and distrust.

Yu Peiyu said with surprise:"Madame, how can you say that?"

Madame Hai Tang said:"Why did you just stare at the girl next to me? She wore a veil, you couldn't see her face. Could it be that you met her before?"

Yu Peiyu asked:"Who..who is she?"

Madame Hai Tang laughed:"Don't lie to me. I knew from the beginning you are the dead Yu Peiyu. I should tell you, nobody has been able to fool me before."

Indeed this beautiful woman was very sharp and cunning.

Yu Peiyu smiled lightly:"Nobody wants to lie to you, Madame. Nobody can tell lies in front of a beautiful lady."

Madame Hai Tang asked:"And what about you?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I think belong to those people too."

Madame Hai Tang laughed:"Good! Very good!"

She clapped her hands and a girl walked out. She looked ever so sad but also very pretty.

Yu Peiyu of course knew that this girl was his fiancée, Lin Daiyu.

Madame Hai Tang looked at him and asked:"Do you recognize her?"

Yu Peiyu replied calmly:"No, I don't."

It took Yu Peiyu a lot of effort to say those words calmly. After he said it he drank a cup of wine.

Madame Hai Tang turned to Lin Daiyu and asked: "Do you recognize him?"

Lin Daiyu answered coldly: "No, I don't know this man."

It pained Yu Peiyu to hear these words.

Madame Hai Tang finally sighed softly: "Well it seems that you don't recognize her. You're not that Yu Peiyu. If a man doesn't even acknowledge his own wife he might as well be dead, don't you think so?"

Yu Peiyu's heart was bleeding but he smiled: "Madame, you're very right. Let us drink to our heart's contend."

He poured another cup and drank and didn't look at Lin Daiyu anymore.

Madame Hai Tang said: "You're drunk now."

Yu Peiyu said: "Never mind, let us drink heartily."

Madame Hai Tang smiled: "When you're drunk nothing matters anymore. Drink up."

Yu Peiyu is quite capable of handling liquor but this wine is quite strong. After a few cups he already felt a bit woozy.

Madame Hai Tang gently said: "Just rest! If the next time you want to get drunk you can always look for me."

Yu Peiyu thought he saw a group of men in a daze but wasn't sure. And he could hear the voice of Madame Hai Tang saying: "This Yu Peiyu is a newcomer in Wulin, do all of you believe me."

Wulin is a dangerous place, a lot of people are suspicious of newcomers. Fortunately Madame Hai Tang dealt with these people otherwise Yu Peiyu was again in a lot of trouble.

Yu Peiyu wanted to thank her but was too drunk to speak anymore.

He could hear Madame Hai Tang saying:"This young man is my guest. From now on he will always be a friend of the Baihua Association. I hope you can leave him alone in the future too."

When Yu Peiyu woke up everyone was gone, only some birds were chirping.

Suddenly he saw another pretty girl standing there looking at him. It wasn't Lin Daiyu or Madame Hai Tang.

It was the twin sister of Ji Lingfeng, Lingyan.

Ji Lingyan said:"Our little swallow has woken up. Why do you have to drink wine? There are lots of other nice drinks in the world."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"The worries of man. You won't understand Miss Robin."

Ji Lingyan sighed too:"Do you know that the robin has problems too?"

Yu Peiyu asked:"What kind of problems?"

Ji Lingyan was crying:"There is a lot of blood in my nest. I don't want to stay there anymore. Where can I go?"

She held Yu Peiyu's hand and begged:"Please take me with you. I will always follow you."

Yu Peiyu suddenly thought of something and sternly asked:"How did you know who I am? And why do you want to come with me?"

Ji Lingyan said:"I recognize your eyes, you have very nice eyes. And you are very brave. Furthermore you look like a swallow, you're different from other men and that is why I like you."

Yu Peiyu thought:This girl is mentally handicapped her other senses must be stronger than other people. It isn't strange that she saw through me.

Yu Peiyu was silent for awhile and said:"I am going to very dangerous places and a lot of people might want to harm

you."

Ji Lingyan said:" But you can protect me, right?"

She stared at Yu Peiyu with her pretty eyes filled with hope and entreaty, how can anyone say no to such a sweet girl.

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I really cannot deny your request. But I cannot even guarantee my own safety, how can I protect you."

Ji Lingyan smiled sweetly:"I knew you would take me along."

Yu Peiyu walked in front and she followed him to everywhere. However even Yu Peiyu didn't know where he should go.

All of a sudden four men swiftly advanced towards them. Judging from their levels of art of levitation they were advanced martial artists.

These men were Lin Shoujuan, Wang Yuluo, Ximen Feng and Shen Yinqiang.

They looked at Yu Peiyu viciously, Wang Yuluo was the first one to speak:"Are you Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu calmly replied:"Yes, I am Yu Peiyu. May I ask who all of your are, sirs?

And what can I do for all of you?"

The four of them carefully observed him and couldn't find anything amiss with this Yu Peiyu. But they didn't know that everything that has happened has made Yu Peiyu only stronger.

Wang Yuluo laughed:"Young master Yu, you're a newcomer in Wulin and you are highly respected by Madame Hai Tang. But please forgive us for being rude, but I would like to see your martial arts."

Yu Peiyu laughed loudly and said:"After hearing Madame Hai Tang's words you are still a bit suspicious. So you want me to

display my martial arts and you can confirm whether I am the dead Yu Peiyu."

Wang Yuluo smiled:"Nowadays a lot of people are well-versed in the art of disguise, young master Yu."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Can't you just see whether I am wearing a disguise?"

Wang Yuluo answered:"The art of disguise has many different variations. Because we cannot be certain whether you're wearing a disguise we have to test young master Yu in a different way."

Yu Peiyu asked:"May I ask why the deceased young master Yu is so important to all of you? Even when he is dead you seem to be very interested in him."

Wang Yuluo was a bit annoyed now and loudly said:"After young master Yu has displayed your martial arts, you will understand."

Wang Yuluo readied his sword and stabbed out. This stance was called "The Dragon Lifting His Head." This was a stance of the real Wang Yuluo's martial arts.

And this Wang Yuluo was able to display this technique excellently.

However Yu Peiyu couldn't fight him because the martial arts of the Xiantian Wuji School are quite different and easily recognized. If he fought this man his cover will be blown.

Suddenly Wang Yuluo's sword was intercepted by a short sword. His hand felt numb after exchanging stances with this person.

He saw it was the girl who was standing next to Yu Peiyu.

Ji Lingyan smiled:"He is a good man I cannot allow you to bully him."

Wang Yuluo asked her:"Miss, who are you? Why do you fight his battles?"

Ji Lingyan smiled:"My father and my sister love to kill people. Although I have never killed anyone before but I won't allow mean men bully my friends."

She attacked Wang Yuluo with her two short swords.

Her movements were gentle and elegant but her techniques were fast and ruthless.

Yu Peiyu was surprised to see this innocent girl display such vicious sword techniques.

At this point she already attacked Wang Yuluo with 49 stances. The two swords formed a perfect match and forced Wang Yuluo only to defend.

Lin Shoujuan who was also a famous swordsman was amazed to see her skills.

She stopped her attacks and smiled:"Everyone says that my stances are very ruthless, is that true?"

Wang Yuluo smiled wryly:"Very good techniques."

He looked at Yu Peiyu and Ji Lingyan for a moment and turned around and left.

The other three men followed.

Ji Lingyan said to Yu Peiyu:"Shall we go too?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"You wanted me to protect you but it is you that is protecting me. I underestimated you and I never thought you would know such superior martial arts."

Ji Lingyan smiled:"You're saying my martial arts is good too. My birds say that too. They told me when robin has learnt martial arts she won't be afraid of eagles anymore. Wore those men eagles?"

On their way she kept telling her adventures with birds. This bird did that, that bird was in love with the other bird.

Yu Peiyu was amused and it made their walk very interesting.

For days they walked, Ji Lingyan would always ask questions. Yu Peiyu always took the time and patience to answer her questions.

They two of them were quite a pair, sometimes Ji Lingyan would do silly things and Yu Peiyu often would nicely reproach her. But she would often pout and Yu Peiyu was there to make her happy again, a lot of passer-bys were envious of their relationship.

During one night Ji Lingyan already slept and Yu Peiyu went out for a stroll. They were staying at a small inn.

He was looking at the flowers and was thinking of Lin Daiyu. He felt sad when he thought of her and sighed.

When suddenly four swords stabbed towards him.

These four men wore black robes and used a black cloth to hide their face. You could only see their eyes.

His attackers weren't out to kill him, they wanted Yu Peiyu to display his martial arts.

Yu Peiyu now had a few flesh wounds, but still didn't counter-attack. The four men were even more suspicious now, one of them said:"Just kill him."

Another man replied:"Yes, you're right! We cannot permit any risks."

Yu Peiyu knew who these men were but deliberately said:"Who are you? If you want to fight me at least reveal yourselves and challenge me as a man. I only fight with real men not with ambushing scoundrels."

The third man said:"If you don't defend, DIE!"

They changed their attacks now and if Yu Peiyu didn't counter-attack he will die very soon.

A red fog appeared between Yu Peiyu and his attackers, the four men stopped their attacks and knew there was something strange about this fog.

They heard a voice saying:"The flower isn't a flower. The fog isn't a fog. After being heart-broken the only thing that remains...."

The four men quickly left this place, Yu Peiyu loudly asked:"Is Madame Hai Tang here? Thank you for helping me."

A figure appeared but it wasn't Madame Hai Tang but Lin Daiyu.

Yu Peiyu was startled to see her but tried not to reveal his identity or emotions. He spoke first:"It is you, Miss. Thank you for saving me."

She waved her hand and coldly said:"Why are you called Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu didn't know how to answer this remark.

She continued:"I suggest you would change your name, this name is very ominous. It will only draw unnecessary trouble. Although I have orders from my mistress to save you, but I can't save you all the time."

After being silent for awhile Yu Peiyu asked:"I think there is also another reason, right?"

She said:"Yes there is another reason.

Now that he is dead I don't want to hear his name again."

Yu Peiyu said:"But I...."

She interrupted him:"You are unworthy to carry his name."

She walked away after saying this, Yu Peiyu just stood there. He was very hurt, the woman he loves treats him this coldly.

After pondering for some time he walked back, he saw a short old man walking this way he had a long white beard.

The old man had a funny smile on his face, Yu Peiyu thought he looked familiar but couldn't remember where he met this man before.

He was holding a painting in his hand and showed it to Yu Peiyu. He asked: "Look! Can you tell me what I have painted."

Yu Peiyu looked at the painting and saw that the mountains didn't look like mountains and the clouds didn't look like clouds. It looked more like the old man spilled his ink on the paper.

Yu Peiyu shook his head: "I can't tell."

The old man said: "It is the mountain up ahead, do you see?"

Yu Peiyu looked at the painting and compared it to the mountain and saw it looked a bit like it. He laughed: "Now I see it."

The old man was laughing loudly too, Yu Peiyu saw that the old man was laughing very happily. And couldn't help ask: "Why are you laughing?"

The old man clapped his hands and said: "I succeeded!"

Yu Peiyu asked: "In what?"

The old man said: "I finally managed to capture the essence of the mountain in my painting."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "This painting has captured the essence of the mountain?"

The old man explained: "It is a mountain but I drew it so it wouldn't look like a mountain. But if you look carefully it is a mountain. Although I didn't give it the form of the mountain, I managed to put the essence of the mountain in my painting."

Yu Peiyu pondered over the man's theory and softly said: "Not many people will understand the essence of this painting."

The old man clapped: "Other people may not see it, but I can. If I painted the mountain it will appear like a mountain to me. In my eyes and in my heart I know I painted a

mountain. The beautiful part is I understand it but other people do not."

After saying this he laughed happily again and left.

He softly repeated those words to himself and thought long about the old man's words.

And he remembered one of teachings of his father about martial arts:"Peiyu, if you put too much attention and emphasis on the form and techniques of the sword, no matter how wonderful your stances are it won't be the highest level. The martial arts of Xiantian Wuji places emphasis on the intention and not the form, evolve beyond the mere form of stances and techniques. Enter the world of no boundaries and no extremes, yin and yang becoming one. Simplicity over complex, when you understand this theory you have mastered the art of the sword."

He sat under a tree and pondered over the words of his father and the silly old man. He began to understand it now he picked up a branch and used it as a sword.

In his heart he was thinking of the stance "No Boundaries On Heaven And Earth" of the Xiantian Wuji swordsmanship. But his movements were not matching the movements of this stance.

This stance was "No Boundaries On Heaven And Earth" but the form of it didn't match that of "No Boundaries On Heaven And Earth." But it contained the essence of "No Boundaries On Heaven And Earth."

If you have forms in your martial arts your adversary might be able to spot a flaw and defeat you. However when you only show the intentions of your swordsmanship and have no form, how can your opponent see through your martial arts and flaws and defeat you.

Yu Peiyu was very happy when he finally figured it out and screamed:"I have it! I understand now!"

Ji Lingyan walked towards him and asked:"What do you understand?"

She woke up and didn't see Yu Peiyu and decided to look for him and found him screaming happily.

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Didn't your friends the little birds tell you?"

Ji Lingyan shook her head:"They don't understand either."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Well, if they don't understand you can tell them it doesn't matter. But if they do understand they won't have to fear those eagles anymore."

Ji Lingyan smiled:"They say you're right. But they also say that eagles are frightening but humans are more frightening."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Yes, they are right."

They walked back to the inn, and when they entered their room they saw three old men sitting on a bed.

One of those old man was bald but had a white long beard and had a ruddy complexion.

Yu Peiyu recognized this old man as the best secretive weaponry expert of the realm the leader of the Tang Clan in Sichuan province. The famous Unparalleled Old Man Tang Wushuang. On the bed were 20 odd small daggers, forks and such, these little weapons were feared by everyone in Wulin, the famous poisonous secretive weaponry of the Tang Clan.

The other two men were Ximen Feng and Wang Yuluo, of course now they have removed their black robes and black veils.

Yu Peiyu took a deep breath and said to Ji Lingyan:"Never guessed that we would have such esteemed visitors."

The bald old man observed Yu Peiyu with his brilliant sharp eyes for a while.

He turned to Wang Yuluo and Ximen Feng and asked:"This is the man, you were talking about."

Wang Yuluo respectfully answered:"Yes, he is."

Tang Wushuang said:"Very well! I will test him."

He snapped his five fingers and ten odd secretive weapons flew up towards Yu Peiyu.

Immediately afterwards he waved with his hand another ten odd weapons flew up towards Yu Peiyu.

There were still seven, eight secretive weapons left on the bed.

This Tang Wushuang had secretive weapons concealed almost everywhere and could use them at any time.

All those secretive weapons had different shapes and different functions.

But these twenty odd weapons came from all different directions. The force of those weapons was similar to twenty odd martial arts experts storming at Yu Peiyu simultaneously with their weapons.

Yu Peiyu had never saw such an excellent display of secretive weaponry before.

Yu Peiyu still had the branch in his hand and closed his eyes and used the stance "No Boundaries On Heaven And Earth." He applied the theory he just understood.

And everyone couldn't grasp his technique and only vaguely saw him drawing two circles in the air.

They heard a series of tak, tak, tak

all those secretive weapons were stuck on the branch.

Tang Wushuang praised:"Good swordsmanship!"

He patted Wang Yuluo on the shoulder and asked:"Well, I have tested him. Could you see to which school he belongs?"

Wang Yuluo said in a disappointing manner:"No I couldn't."

Tang Wushuang laughed loudly:"Not even I have seen such swordplay in more than these twenty years that I have

roamed Wulin. But I tell you this the Xiantian Wuji School doesn't have such superb stances."

Wang Yuluo agreed with him.

Tang Wushuang smiled:"I knew from the beginning that this young master Yu isn't that Yu Peiyu. If he was really that Yu Peiyu in disguise would he really use the same name."

Wang Yuluo apologized:"Young master Yu, please forgive us for being rude."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"It doesn't matter, I just..."

Suddenly the door opened and the waiter barged in. His eyes were red and was panting heavily. He looked very angry and mean.

Ji Lingyan screamed and hid behind Yu Peiyu.

The waiter stormed towards them and Ximen Feng used his leg to kick the chair next to the bed to the waiter.

But the waiter used his fist to smash the chair and everyone was surprised that this mere waiter had such a strength.

Wang Yuluo drew his sword and stabbed the waiter. The waiter didn't avoid it and even stormed towards the tip.

The sword pierced through his chest and Wang Yuluo used his leg to kick him away.

The blood splattered on his hand.

Wang Yuluo frowned:"What has happened to this waiter? Has he gone mad?.."

Before he could say anything else Tang Wushuang drew a short sabre from his girdle and chopped off his hand.

Wang Yuluo screamed in pain and fainted.

Ximen Feng was scared and surprised and asked:"Master Tang, what.."

Tang Wushuang quickly explained:"The waiter was poisoned by people from the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. Not only will he go mad but his blood will become a strong poison. Whoever

comes in contact with this blood will be poisoned too. I quickly chopped off his hand before the poison travelled through his body. If not he will rot away and die horribly."

Ximen Feng broke out in a cold sweat and stuttered:"This....this is...is one of the infamous seven great demonic skills of the...the Heavenly Silkworm Sect, the Demon Corpse And Blood Goblin Spell. That means there are people from the Heavenly Silkworm Sect here."

Yu Peiyu was also a bit frightened by his words and looked at the chopped off hand and saw it turn into a pile of blood.

Yu Peiyu shivered and Tang Wushuang was also shivering and said loudly:"Are The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies here?"

There was a sweet laughter outside.

Tang Wushuang was even shivering worse now.

One of the most enchanting voices Yu Peiyu has ever heard said:"Master Tang is the smartest one of all these people here. Just in an instant you guessed right. We're here."

Tang Wushuang said loudly:"What business do you have here in the central plains?"

One of the sisters giggled:"We came here to China to pay a visit at your home. Unfortunately you weren't home and heard that you went to Lake Huang for the gathering. But we're too late for the gathering but at least we were able to meet you here."

The voice sounded very innocent but Tang Wushuang was very scared and held on to his short sabre and trembled. He said loudly:"What have you done at my manor?"

The voice replied:"Don't worry master Tang. We went to visit our brother-in-law, so we wouldn't dare to harm anyone of the Tang clan."

Tang Wushuang felt relieved but became very angry:"Who is your brother-in-law?"

The voice said:"Young master Tang is perhaps not the most handsome young man in the realm. But he and my eldest sister do seem to be a perfect pair. Don't you agree?"

Tang Wushuang angrily yelled:"Rubbish! No son of mine will take a witch as his wife! Not while I am around!"

The voice outside giggled:"But they are already married although without your consent. Why do have to separate them, master Tang?"

Tang Wushuang angrily yelled back:"That useless son of mine didn't know the background of that little witch. And he fell for her beauty, but now he won't take that woman as his wife!"

The voiced laughed:"I don't think so. Young master Tang is very dedicated to my sister. And my sister is very pretty and virtuous no man would give her up."

Tang Wushuang yelled:"I have made up my mind. You would be smart to leave this place now."

The voice asked:"So there is nothing we can do to change your mind, master Tang?"

Tang Wushuang replied:"Nothing and nobody can change my mind!"

The voice said:"I hope master Tang will not regret this choice."

Tang Wushuang angrily shouted:"Even if every member of the Tang clan has died he will not take that witch as his wife!"

The voice was silent for a moment but soon said:"Since I cannot convince you, we have to send for the matchmakers."

Yu Peiyu began to understand what this argument is about. It seems that a son of Tang Wushuang fell in love with the eldest sister of the Three Magnificent Flower Ladies. But

Tang Wushuang forbid his son to take that eldest sister as his wife.

And now the three of them have come to force Tang Wushuang to acknowledge that relationship.

Yu Peiyu was curious who the matchmaker could be.

Suddenly a figure dashed through the window, the man looked awfully angry. He had a dark complexion and there were seven short sabres stuck into his body.

Ji Lingyan yelled and hid behind Yu Peiyu again.

The man stared at Tang Wushuang and there was blood coming out of the eyes of the man.

Ximen Feng was sweating heavily and trembled with fear.

Tang Wushuang exclaimed with fear:"The Seven Golden Sabres Turn Into Blood of The Demon Corpse and Blood Demon Spell!"

Suddenly the sabres flew out of the man's body, there were strings attached to the hilts of the sabres and when the ladies pulled the strings the sabres flew out and went back to them.

Seven spurts of blood shot out, Tang Wushuang picked up Wang Yuluo and threw him out of the window and he swiftly leapt through the window too.

Yu Peiyu struck out with his palm, the force of his palm dispersed the spurts away from him.

Ximen Feng leapt up and clung onto the beam on the roof. He was a bit too slow and some drops of blood landed on his body. He bit his teeth and drew a knife and cut off the flesh which was infected.

The blood had a disgusting black colour and coloured the walls of the room black.

Yu Peiyu frowned and leapt out of the window and wanted to confront them.

Tang Wushuang warned him:"Young master Yu, be careful!"

Ji Lingyan smiled:"No one can harm him."

Yu Peiyu saw five people lying under a tree, sleeping. They must have fallen victim to the Three Magnificent Flower Ladies.

He also saw three beautiful young women standing there wearing cloaks.

The three wore tiaras with flower motifs.

The girl who wore a golden tiara looked worried and sad, she must be that eldest sister.

The second girl wore a silver tiara, she looked sexy and seductive.

The third girl looked very pretty and innocent.

These three sisters were the infamous experts of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect.

The three sisters were staring at Yu Peiyu too.

The girl with the iron tiara spoke first:"My word, what a dashing young man! I wonder what you are doing here? I hope not seducing any poor woman?"

Yu Peiyu said calmly:"I came here to encounter your capabilities in killing."

Iron Blossom smiled:"Killing? Killing is such a nasty habit it will do our beauty no good. I have never killed before, do you regularly kill people?"

This girl pretended to be sweet and innocent, and looked very convincing. It is hard to imagine that she and her other two sisters were capable of using such vicious methods of killing.

Yu Peiyu was a bit annoyed and said:"I believe those two men died at hands of you."

Iron Blossom looked very surprise and innocent and said:"Were those men killed? We didn't kill them. I thought

you did."

Yu Peiyu said with surprise:" Me?"

Iron Blossom said:"When they entered your room they were alive, but now they're dead. So you've must have killed them when they were in your room."

Yu Peiyu was angered that someone would so easily fake innocence and kill randomly.

Iron Blossom sighed:"I know you must have your reasons for killing them. But the next time you're angry you should not kill innocent people anymore."

Yu Peiyu couldn't retort that and didn't know what to say to this girl.

She smiled and took out a handkerchief and walked towards Yu Peiyu and said:"If you're still feeling unhappy you should go with me. I will make you very happy."

And she waved her handkerchief in front of Yu Peiyu.

She walked back to her spot and turned around and saw Yu Peiyu didn't follow her.

The handkerchief contained a powerful powder that could intoxicate people. She was startled that Yu Peiyu wasn't intoxicated.

This was also one of the seven famous skills of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect, namely "The Soul Catching Handkerchief."

Numerous famous heroes have fallen victim to this skill, Iron Blossom was surprised to see Yu Peiyu unaffected.

Iron Blossom smiled:"Well, aren't you arrogant?"

A voice further up ahead said:"If you follow us, we will do our best to entertain you."

The voice sounded very seductive and sexy. Few men in the world could resist the temptation.

And Iron Blossom said:"I know you won't resist us."

Yu Peiyu calmly said:"No, I will not go."

Silver Blossom (the second sister) said:"Are you really that unwilling?"

She moved her hands seductively over her body, every movement was filled with temptation.

Yu Peiyu didn't respond he just glared at her casually. That was his answer.

Silver Blossom sighed:"But why are you just standing there?"

Yu Peiyu laughed:"I just want to see what martial arts skills the three ladies have."

Silver Blossom's face changed and said:"Very well!"

The three sisters spun and their cloaks were removed. They only wore a very thin undergarment you could practically see their bodies.

And they performed a very sexual dance, every movement was like calling out to Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu didn't feel embarrassed and wasn't slightly impressed.

He looked at Golden Blossom and sighed:"Miss Golden Blossom, what would young master Tang think?"

She suddenly stopped these words pierced right through her heart.

However Silver Blossom giggled and lead the dance again.

They continued their seductive dance, every movement had a reference to sex.

Tang Wushuang warned Yu Peiyu:"Be careful! This is called "The Dance of the Seductive Demon."

Tang Wushuang kept his distance and didn't look at them. He was afraid that he wouldn't be able to compose himself and walk over to them.

But after awhile he was captivated by their panting and watched. The old man blushed and looked like he was going to storm over to them. Fortunately he was able to compose himself but couldn't keep his eyes on them.

Yu Peiyu was taught the ways of self-control and self-cultivation at a very young age by his father. And his level of cultivation was not inferior to abbot Tianyun of Shaolin and reverend Chuchen of Wudang.

But he suddenly noticed something while they were dancing around him they spun a web of very thin silk.

Normal people would be too captivated by their dance to see it. But Yu Peiyu was different.

Iron Blossom smiled:"Very sharp eyes!"

Yu Peiyu said:"All of you performed this dance just to spun this web."

Iron Blossom smiled:"Not really this dance of ours is a formidable skill itself. If you look at master Tang you will understand. If he wasn't the father of young master Tang, this number one secretive weapon expert was already...."

She giggled.

Yu Peiyu turned around and saw Tang Wushuang panting heavily and clutching to the wall.

Yu Peiyu was shocked to see this, he understood if the three sisters were using this dance against Tang Wushuang he would be dead right now.

She giggled for some time and sighed:"Unfortunately you're too stupid to understand our dance. That's why we spun this silver web around you."

Yu Peiyu said:"Silver web?"

Iron Blossom said:"Yes, it is made from our precious silkworms. It is very strong that's why we call it silver silk. Also there is a name for this web, namely the Web of Love."

Yu Peiyu said:"Web of Love... a very nice name."

Iron Blossom said:"If you entangled in the web of love you'll unable to move again. However you have too sharp eyes so we have use the web against you now."

Yu Peiyu knew that the Heavenly Silkworm Sect was very difficult to handle, he was also feeling a bit afraid now. But didn't show it.

He was now surrounded by the silk threads. Iron Blossom said:"If you surrender to us now we will make you very happy."

Yu Peiyu smiled lightly: "You have the web of love, but I have the sword of intelligence. As the saying goes:

The sword of intelligence will always cut through the web of love."

He still had the branch in his hands and those twenty odd secretive weapons were still stuck to it.

He channeled his internal power through the branch and a few of those secretive weapons flew out with incredible force toward the web.

Much more powerful than using your hands to throw them.

But all those secretive weapons were stuck into the web.

Yu Peiyu was surprised to see that and thought if a man was stuck into it he would be unable to move.

But then he thought his situation with Lin Daiyu. Wasn't he also entangled in another web of love.

He felt sad and said softly:"Web of love....web of love. A very good name."

Iron Blossom said happily:"Are going to give in now?"

Yu Peiyu didn't say anything and didn't hear her question.

Iron Blossom said:"If you don't surrender now, don't blame us!"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"If I am truly to die in this web I have no regrets."

Iron Blossom said:"Fine!"

She turned her hand and the web was closing in on Yu Peiyu. Yu Peiyu was still in a trance and didn't see the coming danger.

Golden Blossom softly said:"Dying in the web of love.....it seems he also knows what love is....dying in the name of love. Such a grand death, is it not?"

Yu Peiyu laughed and recited a poem:"If one does not have it you will ponder, pondering makes one old and sad. After thinking for some time,....I feel that pondering is still the best..."

He used his stick to draw two circles in the air and all the remaining secretive weapons flew out and were stuck in the web.

Iron Blossom smiled:"Those worthless iron junk is useless against our web."

Yu Peiyu wielded the stick as a sword and stabbed out. Every stab was focused on the secretive weapons on the web, and every stab was filled with tremendous strength.

Iron Blossom's hand shook and couldn't retrieve the web, the web was also slowly being pulled away.

She exclaimed with surprise:"A very clever idea!"

This silver silk is very sticky material, when you're stuck in it. It is impossible to break free from it.

If Yu Peiyu used his stick directly on the web it would get stuck to the web. Even if he pierced a hole into the web he himself would be stuck in the web.

But he first used the secretive weapons to hit the web first and used the stick to hit the weapons. So his branch won't get stuck.

This may sound very simple but if you're not intelligent enough you will never think of this idea. This branch is truly the sword of intelligence.

Every stance was generated with his internal strength and the web was slowly being punctured by the secretive weapons.

Chapter 8 : The Poison Of Happiness

Yu Peiyu screamed:"What have you done to me? Why won't you just kill me?"

She smiled:"It will be a pity to kill a man like you."

Yu Peiyu asked:"What do you want from me?"

Ji Lingyan said:"Soon you feel like you have entered a living hell. But I can make you feel like you have entered paradise."

The energy that Yu Peiyu focused through his branch and the secretive weapons punctured a hole through the web of love.

The three sisters were shocked to see their web being penetrated and stamped their feet and fled into the woods.

Iron Blossom said:"Excellent! We never thought that someone could break through our web. You should feel proud and arrogant...."

She drew a sabre and chopped off the arms of the five men lying under the tree.

The five men were not bothered and still smiled happily.

Iron Blossom threw the arms to Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu angrily yelled:"At this point you're stilling harming innocent people!"

He leapt up and wanted to grab Iron Blossom but he tried to avoid the flying arms. He knew if the arms touched him he will be poisoned.

With success he avoided and descended down on Iron Blossom. But suddenly the arms exploded and the blood turned into a reddish fog. The fog floated towards Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu could manage to flick backwards and landed far away from the fog. The fog slowly dispersed, Yu Peiyu could

hear Iron Blossom saying:"We will never leave you alone... Just wait and see!"

When the fog cleared the three sisters were gone and only the golden sabre was stuck in the tree.

The reeking of blood made Yu Peiyu sick and he felt like throwing up.

Tang Wushuang sighed:"This is another deadly skill of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. Namely "The Alteration Of Blood And The Blood Breakout". Few people in the realm can capture them."

Tang Wushuang looked a bit pale and very scared.

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Such an evil sect! Why doesn't anyone organize a punitive expedition against them?"

Tang Wushuang said:"No one would dare to antagonize them. Their martial arts is ferocious and deadly, their poison is extremely lethal."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Who is their leader?"

Tang Wushuang answered:"Their leader is a very mysterious man and his whereabouts uncertain. No one in Wulin has ever seen his true appearances."

Yu Peiyu said:"I don't believe that no one can defeat this heretic sect."

Tang Wushuang sighed:"Although this sect is very deadly but they hardly come to China and stay in the southern regions.

Most people are happy that they stay at their own place. Why make them angry?"

Yu Peiyu was silent for awhile and said:"There will be someone to deal with them."

Tang Wushuang looked at Yu Peiyu and said:"You are young and have excellent martial arts, if there is someone who can eradicate them it must be you."

He continued with a sigh:" As for me, I....(*sigh) When I was young I was very outrageous; women, drinking were my favourite leisure activities. I never put much emphasis on self-control and self-discipline. So that's why the skills of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect are my greatest fears."

Now Yu Peiyu understood why this Wulin dignitary was so scared of these three sisters. And didn't do a thing earlier. But he was able to tell this matter to Yu Peiyu without any restriction. Yu Peiyu admired his broad-mindedness, and thought he was very fit to be the leader of the famous Tang clan.

Ximen Feng came out now and smiled strangely:"They will never leave you alone till the day you die. Young master Yu should be very careful now."

Yu Peiyu said casually:"Thank you for your concern. But this matter does not concern you, Mr. Ximen."

Ximen Feng's face changed and said:"So be it. I will take my leave now."

He turned to Tang Wushuang and said:"Master Tang,..."

Tang Wushuang spoke to Yu Peiyu:"Young master Yu,..."

Yu Peiyu interrupted him:"Don't worry master Tang. I can take care of myself."

Tang Wushuang thought for awhile and said:"I know you can take care of yourself.

Remember this the sect members of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect will be quite lethal on the first seven days. If you can avoid of them for the first seven days you will be fine."

Ximen Feng strangely said:"Till now, no one has been able to stay away from them for the first seven days."

He picked up the fainted Wang Yuluo and didn't look at Yu Peiyu anymore and left.

After Tang Wushuang left Ji Lingyan came out and smiled.

Suddenly Yu Peiyu fell down, Ji Lingyan quickly helped him up and cried:"You are poisoned too. Why didn't you say anything earlier?"

Yu Peiyu saw Ji Lingyan crying and didn't want to make her anymore sad and said:"This little poison cannot harm me."

Ji Lingyan cried:"But why didn't say something earlier?"

Yu Peiyu said:"That Ximen Feng is up to no good and if he knew if I was poisoned he might use force against us."

Ji Lingyan said:"You, humans are so strange. Birds are...."

Yu Peiyu didn't hear her words he was thinking about the three sisters that might come back anytime.

He told Ji Lingyan:"Why don't go and play with your friends."

Ji Lingyan shook her head:"No I will stay with you. You are injured and I should take care of you. I will give you one of my pills which I give to my friends when they're ill."

She took out a pill and gave it Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu looked at her innocent smile and said:"How can I eat pills of birds?"

She put the pill in his mouth and Yu Peiyu swallowed. But after awhile he did feel a bit better and the pill tasted quite sweet.

After some time he fell asleep.

Sometimes he would wake up and wanted to tell Ji Lingyan to run away. Because he was afraid she might get hurt by the three sisters.

But after awhile he wouldn't feel worried about it anymore.

After a very long time Yu Peiyu gradually woke up and found himself sleeping in the same room in the inn.

Ji Lingyan smiled:"My medicine is very good, isn't it?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Yes, very good."

He quickly asked:"How many days have I slept in total?"

Ji Lingyan said:"Nine days."

Yu Peiyu was surprised that already nine days have passed and could avoid those three sisters.

Ji Lingyan asked:"Are you still thinking of them?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly:"Why would I think of them? But why didn't they look for me?"

Ji Lingyan said:"You never left why would they look for you?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Of course! They must have thought that I am long gone now and never suspected I would stay here. A great plan of you!"

Ji Lingyan smiled in a silly way:"What plan?"

Yu Peiyu watched her and thought is she really mentally handicapped or is she pretending.

Ji Lingyan said:"We must go now, my friends told me that they are still looking for you everywhere else."

Yu Peiyu could hear the chirping of birds outside.

When they walked out Yu Peiyu thought what happened to the corpses and those five men who were lying under the tree. And why weren't the local authorities here to investigate the murder scene?

He looked at Ji Lingyan and thought she might have something to do with this. Again he asked himself is she really mentally handicapped?

But if she is just pretending what could be her motive? Yu Peiyu suddenly thought she saved my life I shouldn't suspect her.

Ji Lingyan suddenly happily said:"My friends tell me that up ahead is a nice place. We could play there. Shall we go?"

Yu Peiyu smiled and stared at her pretty innocent face and said:"No matter where you will go I will follow you."

She was very happy and hugged Yu Peiyu and gave him a kiss on his cheek.

Yu Peiyu slowly began to forget about The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies.

Ji Lingyan asked:"It is very far, are you tired?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Nope, I have never felt stronger before."

After walking for some time Ji Lingyan wanted to stop for some food. At an inn they rested but somehow Yu Peiyu didn't feel like eating. Ji Lingyan was full after eating something they continued their walk, after awhile Yu Peiyu felt very tired. The vitality he had earlier was gone.

She asked again:"Are you tired?"

But Yu Peiyu didn't want to ruin her joy and said:"Not at all."

But with every step he felt more and more miserable and tired. He just wanted to sleep.

They arrived in a town and walked to a big manor. Ji Lingyan said to Yu Peiyu:"This is the Golden Shell manor, the keeper of the manor is called Luo Ziliang. He knows some martial arts and is very rich.

However he is very thrifty and he doesn't indulge in luxuries. He isn't all too keen on hiring servants."

They continued their walk in the town

Yu Peiyu was too tired to respond actually but after hearing that she even knew these little things he couldn't help asking:"How do you know all these matters?"

She smiled:"My friends told me."

Yu Peiyu smiled back:"You have very smart friends."

She said:"My friends fly all over the world and see many things. And they tell me all about it."

Yu Peiyu said:"Luckily you are a nice girl if not with all those secrets. You can become a very scary person."

They stopped at another rather big manor not as big as Golden Shell Manor.

Ji Lingyan laughed:"Let's enter. It is very nice inside."

Yu Peiyu said:"This is the manor of someone else. We can't just go in."

Ji Lingyan walked in and walked to the main hall and sat down. No one was there and Yu Peiyu said:"Let us leave before the keeper comes out."

She loudly called out:"Why is there no tea!"

A man came out and brought her a cup of tea and respectfully put it on the table.

Ji Lingyan said:"I am hungry."

A few men came out and brought out a few dishes and put it on the table. She started to eat and said to Yu Peiyu:"Sit down eat some too."

Yu Peiyu was too surprised and he wasn't feel hungry.

He asked:"Do you know the owner of this manor?"

She didn't answer and called out:"Come here!"

Some men frantically walked over and stood in front of her.

Ji Lingyan asked:"Who brought this dish, it is too salty."

She pointed at one of the plates at the table.

One of the men knelt down and said:"It was me."

Ji Lingyan said:"It is too salty! What is the idea!"

Yu Peiyu said:"He just brought it over, he didn't know it was too salty. Don't be upset now!"

Ji Lingyan smiled sweetly:"I don't know anything. Don't be mad at me."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"You..."

The man interrupted with them and said loudly:"I shouldn't have brought this dish to you. I deserve to die....I will chop off this hand."

He drew a blade and chopped off his hand without hesitation.

Ji Lingyan said:"That is more like it."

Yu Peiyu said:"Why are you so vicious?"

Ji Lingyan said:"They're are not birds."

Yu Peiyu angrily said:"You shouldn't behave like this!"

Ji Lingyan said:"They're are all very willling to chop off their hands. I willl proof it. All of you cut off two of your fingers."

The men all drew a blade and cut off two fingers without thinking twice.

Ji Lingyan asked:"You are all very willling to do that, right? And you're all very happy, is it not?"

All the men replied:"Yes, we're very willling to cut off our fingers."

Ji Lingyan continued:"If you're happy why aren't you laughing."

The men all started laughing.

Yu Peiyu was too shocked and scared to speak anymore.

Ji Lingyan said:"They sold their souls and bodies to me. Soon you willl do the same thing."

Yu Peiyu angrily said:"YOU ARE MAD! I willl never..."

Ji Lingyan interrupted him:"You don't even have the strength to stand up now. With one finger I can push you over."

Yu Peiyu tried to get up but his legs were wobbly and sat down again.

Ji Lingyan lightly said:"Soon you willl feel very cold and suddenly very warm. And later on you willl feel like thousands ants are crawling over your body and biting you."

Yu Peiyu screamed:"What have you done to me? Why won't you just kill me?"

She smiled:"It willl be a pity to kill a man like you."

Yu Peiyu asked:"What do you want from me?"

Ji Lingyan said:"Soon you feel like you have entered a living hell. But I can make you feel like you have entered paradise."

He was starting to tremble with cold.

Yu Peiyu asked again:"What do you want?

Ji Lingyan said casually:"I just want you to kill all the people in Golden Shell Manor."

Yu Peiyu said with difficulty:"I have no strength left in my body, how can I kill anyone."

Yu Peiyu felt more miserable he was very warm now.

Ji Lingyan said:"When you arrive at Golden Shell Manor you will have your strength back and you will even feel more powerful."

The torment Yu Peiyu went through was too much he tried to get up and walked to the door. And suddenly he stopped and said:"I cannot kill innocent people!"

Ji Lingyan laughed:"Do you want to bet with me?"

Yu Peiyu shouted:"I thought you were an innocent naive girl. But I never would have thought you are such a monster. I never suspected you. You're even worse than your sister Ji Lingfeng."

Ji Lingyan smiled mysteriously:"Who do you think I am?"

Yu Peiyu look at her with difficulty and saw her eyes were different. Very sharp and brilliant.

He was trembling and said with utmost shock:"You...you are Ji Lingfeng!"

Ji Lingfeng laughed:"I pretended to be an idiot for more than ten days. And you fell for it. Birds, talking? You actually believe that nonsense. I used a lot of people to retrieve the information I need.

Birds!?!"

Yu Peiyu was shaking:"You..knew that The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies would not..."

Ji Lingfeng said:"You were poisoned but only lightly. I examined you and you seem to have taken some sort of medicine which protected you from that lethal poison."

Yu Peiyu said:"Yes, the lesser return pill of Kunlun."

Ji Lingfeng smiled:"Unfortunately the lesser pill can't even counter-act my pills of happiness."

Yu Peiyu began to understand:"These men sold themselves to you because they took your poison. This pill of happiness."

Ji Lingfeng said:"It is not a poison. The pill itself can give people lots of joy and strength. But if you do not take it anymore after a long time you will feel very bad."

Yu Peiyu angrily said:"These pills are addictive!"

Ji Lingfeng said:"You're right I just mixed these pills with some seeds from the opium plants."

She turned to those men and asked:"Are you happy? And would you even sell your own parents, wife and children just for these pills?"

The men answered:"Yes, we willl."

Ji Lingfeng said:"If I would stop giving you my pills?"

Before she finished all these men look terrified and begged:"Miss, everything except that. Please don't do that to us."

Yu Peiyu was sweating.

She held the bottle in her hands and told Yu Peiyu:"If you obey my commands this is all yours."

The men were staring at the bottle and were very anxious.

She continued with a gentle voice:"If you comply you can have all the pills you want. You will become very happy."

Yu Peiyu said:"No, I won't take it anymore."

She smiled and took out on pill and held it in her hand. She said:" Here take it!"

He lifted his hand and was about to take the pill when he suddenly saw those men.

They were kneeling at looked at the pill and panted heavily, like dogs. Yu Peiyu thought he wouldn't and will not allow himself to become like them.

He screamed and kicked down two men and ran to the door.

Ji Lingfeng didn't stop him and said:" If you can't stand the pain, you can return at any time."

She smiled evilly:" Even if there are chains around your feet you will find a way to come back. They always do."

Yu Peiyu ran and ran. He reached a desolate place and started to roll on the ground to stop the pain. He hit himself on the chest and bumped his head against a rock.

He remembered the words of Ji Lingfeng about going back.

He didn't care anymore he wanted to go back.

But suddenly a voice said:" Here you are! We've been looking for you."

The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies blocked his way.

Yu Peiyu had lost his senses now and yelled:" Out of my way" !"

He wanted to pass around them and pushed out. Iron Blossom used her leg and tripped Yu Peiyu with ease.

Silver Blossom used her foot to step on his back and said with surprise:" What happened to this man? Has he forgotten his martial arts?"

Golden Blossom said:" Is he the man we're looking for?"

Iron Blossom said:" It is him alright! I recognize his face. He is behaving like an animal now. What happened?"

Yu Peiyu shouted:" I will kill everyone in the Golden Shell Manor. I will do whatever you want me to do. Just give one

of those pills of happiness. Please!"

Golden Blossom said:" He must be poisoned. What a strong poison this pill of happiness is!"

Iron Blossom said:"Never mind that! Let us take him along with us."

She took a large linen bag and put Yu Peiyu in it and took him away.

Not even Ji Lingfeng would have guess that Yu Peiyu would be captured by these three sisters.

Golden Blossom said:"This is a very strange poison. I'm not sure how to create an antidote."

Iron Blossom said:"If we cannot create one no one can."

Silver Blossom coldly said:"Eldest sister, have you forgotten that he is our enemy?"

Golden Blossom sighed:"Even if he is our enemy we should help him. Look at him."

Iron Blossom smiled:"I knew eldest sister wouldn't just love one man."

Golden Blossom smiled:"I'm doing it for you."

Iron Blossom asked:"Me?"

Golden Blossom said:"Yes, I am helping him for you."

Iron Blossom blushed:"I don't even know his name. I...."

Her face was entirely red now and turned away.

So the three sister and Yu Peiyu travelled in a carriage. They were heading south.

Yu Peiyu was feeling horrible and would often scream and yell. But the three sisters didn't torture him or hit him. In fact they took utmost care of him. Especially Iron Blossom looked very worried about Yu Peiyu's condition. Golden Blossom knew she was worried that Yu Peiyu might not recover.

Only Silver Blossom was quite sarcastic all the time.

Silver Blossom said:"Third sister shouldn't fall in love with our enemy."

Golden Blossom said:"If he would take that silly girl as his wife he would become our brother-in-law. So we won't be enemies anymore."

Silver Blossom was stunned and said:"I don't understand what she sees in him."

Golden Blossom smiled:"Not only is he handsome, his martial arts is superb. He is really a good match for her."

Silver Blossom didn't say anything anymore and felt angry.

After crossing Chang Jiang (The Great River) numerous members of their sect would welcome them.

Some of them were even men and women of wealth.

Yu Peiyu gradually felt better and could sit up and eat some porridge from time to time. Iron Blossom was very happy to see him recovering slowly, only Silver Blossom was very upset.

Although the side-effects of the pills of happiness were unbearable but if one can resist the addiction with help. Breaking free from the opium is not impossible. Also The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies are not only good nurses but also skilled physicians.

When they entered a rather large town everyone was captivated by these three sisters. By their beauty and manners.

Silver Blossom walked to a man and asked:"Do you know where Ma Xiaotian lives?"

The man was too happy to see such a pretty woman talking to him and replied:"Miss is a friend of Mr. Ma. Just turn left at the end of this street and you will see a manor with big vermilion doors. That is the residence of Mr. Ma."

She softly said to him: "Come and see me tonight." And she blew in his ear.

The man blushed and said: "I wouldn't dare."

She touched his face and smiled: "Coward."

She walked back to her sisters.

The man stared at her and said softly: "Damn that Ma Xiaotian. All the good things go to wealthy."

Before he could finish his face was itching and when he touched it he noticed it was swollen up. And there was a piercing pain in his ear. He fell to the ground and screamed in pain.

Golden Blossom heard the cries of the man and said: "Why did you do that?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "These lecherous blokes must be taught a lesson. Since when did you become such kind and caring woman. I see you're preparing for your job as the virtuous Mrs. Tang, right?"

Golden Blossom was angered and ignored her and walked ahead.

They walked to the manor of Ma Xiaotian and saw some local ruffians gambling at the stone lions.

Silver Blossom kicked one of them down. The men turned around to see a pretty young woman and were silent.

Silver Blossom tenderly said: "Is this the residence of Mr. Ma?"

All the men stared at her and were under her spell. One of the men laughed and said: "My family name is Ma. You can call me Mr. Ma too. Little Miss, what can I do for you?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "You don't look like the Mr. Ma I am looking for."

She put her face very close to that man, the man thought she was going to kiss him.

But suddenly she slapped him and send him flying. The other men angrily shouted and came to the man's help.

Silver Blossom smiled:"I'm not preparing myself in becoming young Mrs. Tang so I won't be kind and caring. Being a bit more vicious is fine with me."

She is deliberately making fun and irritating Golden Blossom. She heavily hit those men who obviously were no match for her.

Golden Blossom was very angry but didn't say anything but just grunted coldly.

A voice loudly called out from the mansion:"Who dares to fight in front of my manor? Stop it at once!"

A middle-aged man in an expensive brocade walked out.

Silver Blossom laughed:"Mr. Ma, you look very majestic today. Very impressive!"

The men got up and wanted to wanted to attack again. Ma Xiaotian saw Silver Blossom and looked frightened. He quickly knelt down and respectfully said:"This lowly disciple, Ma Xiaotian pays his respects to the three elders. Please forgive me for not welcoming you earlier."

Silver Blossom scoffed:"Mr. Ma, you finally recognized us. If you would come out later we would be dead now and thanks to your servants."

In fact she was the one who started the fight.

Ma Xiaotian broke out in cold sweat and apologetically smiled:"These dogs don't know any better. I willl severely punish them for this..."

Golden Blossom finally said something:"It doesn't matter. I won't pursue this matter. Mr. Ma can you find a suitable place for us to stay? I prefer somewhere tranquil because we have a friend who has fallen ill."

Ma Xiaotian nodded and said he would do his best to find the best place for the three elders to stay. He looked very

humble and scared.

Everyone was surprised to see the ever so arrogant Ma Xiaotian this respectful to three young woman.

When Golden Blossom entered the Ma manor, Silver Blossom turned to Ma Xiaotian and coldly said:"My eldest sister won't pursue this matter. That doesn't mean that I will do the same."

Ma Xiaotian stuttered:"I...I will know what to do."

Iron Blossom was a bit annoyed by her sister and said:"Second sister, you know that eldest sister is a bit depressed. Don't irritate her, please."

Silver Blossom scoffed:"She didn't find me a perfect husband. Why should I please her?"

She turned her head around walked into Ma manor.

When Ma Xiaotian accompanied the three sisters to the main hall he ordered his servants to leave them.

Ma Xiaotian respectfully said:"I already have a place for the three elders to stay."

Golden Blossom asked:"Where is this place?"

Ma Xiaotian said:"In my residence."

He removed a painting from the wall and opened a secret door. Through the secret tunnel they entered a series of very refined decorated rooms.

Silver Blossom coldly asked:"Are we that ugly? Can't we be seen by others? Do you want to us to hide in this basement?"

Ma Xiaotian was initially quite happy but now he was afraid again and stammered:"If the second elder is not please with these chambers I will..."

Golden Blossom interrupted him:"This place will do fine."

She entered the room and a few servants helped Yu Peiyu to his room.

Yu Peiyu felt worried, he didn't like these secretive chambers. But wasn't able to do anything about it.

The servants placed him on a bed and he was lying there and was pondering.

Suddenly Iron Blossom entered his room.

She sat at his bed and smiled at Yu Peiyu but didn't speak.

Yu Peiyu couldn't stand her looking at him like that and asked:"I would like to thank you for helping me, if not for you and your sisters I would be...."

Iron Blossom sweetly smiled:"Don't you hate us anymore?"

Yu Peiyu didn't know how to answer this question just sighed:"I never hated any of you, but I just hope you willl..."

She interrupted him:"Never harm innocents again?"

Yu Peiyu wryly said:"Miss, you said yourself killing won't do your beauty much good."

She stayed quiet and stared at him suddenly she smiled:"Do you like me being pretty?"

Yu Peiyu stuttered:"I...I..."

He didn't know how to respond he felt it was inappropriate to say yes and felt bad if he said no.

He felt it was very difficult to answer the question of this young girl.

She stared at him and said:"Yes is yes and no is no. It is not that difficult to answer."

Yu Peiyu said:"Yes, I like you to be pretty."

She smiled sweetly and said:"So you want me to listen to you?"

This strange, vivacious girl's words were becoming more and more strange.

Yu Peiyu wryly smiled:"I wouldn't dare to hope you willl listen to me."

Iron Blossom gently said:"If you want me to listen to you just say so. I will always listen to you."

Yu Peiyu stuttered again:"I....I..."

Iron Blossom said:"Do you like me to kill innocent people?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Of course not."

Iron Blossom smiled:"So you want me to listen to you?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Yes."

Iron Blossom was feeling very happy and kissed Yu Peiyu on his cheek and giggled. She left and closed the door.

Yu Peiyu stared at the door and softly said : "Why is she so happy? I..I didn't agree to anything."

But suddenly he remembered their actions against the Tang clan and felt scared.

In these couple of days he would often sleep through the days and wake up in a daze.

One day he felt someone crawl under his sheets and softly biting his neck and ear.

And softly blew in his ear, Yu Peiyu woke up but couldn't move, he couldn't see who it was. The candles were out, he asked:"Who are you?"

The person didn't answer and removed his clothes and gently caressed his back.

Yu Peiyu knew it must be Iron Blossom and he felt his heart beating quicker and quicker. He composed himself and seriously said:"Miss, if you really listen to me. You should go now."

The person tenderly said:"Who wants to listen to you? I want you to listen to me..."

Her voice was very seductive and sexy.

Yu Peiyu exclaimed with surprise:"Silver Blossom?"

She seductively said:"If you listen to me I willl never let you down."

Yu Peiyu couldn't move and was sweating, he was panting heavily and his heart was beating very quick.

He asked:"Could you light the candles?"

Silver Blossom said:"Don't you like it this way?" Yu Peiyu said:"I want to look at you."

Silver Blossom giggled:"I never thought you are such a experienced lover."

She lit the candles and stood naked in front of Yu Peiyu and smiled:"You can look at me as long as you want."

Yu Peiyu coldly said:"I just wanted to see what kind of shameless woman you are. You think you're the most beautiful woman in the realm, but you make me sick."

Yu Peiyu never said words like this before but his entire purpose was to make her angry.

Silver Blossom's passion was gone into blind anger and yelled:"You dare to mock me!"

Yu Peiyu continued:"Look in the mirror, you can see what kind of shameless woman you really are...."

She cursed back:"And you think you are very handsome, right? Well, I think I willl like to see how handsome you can be after I'm through with you."

She drew a blade and walked to him and said:"Let us see how many women willl fall in love with you now. After I have turned you into the ugliest man in the realm."

She used the blade and gently cut his face. Yu Peiyu wasn't scared in fact he felt it was quite ironic. So he laughed loudly.

Silver Blossom saw his face was bleeding and wanted to cut another time. But she felt a bit bad about ruining this perfect face.

Yu Peiyu looked at her and loudly said:"Do it! Do it! This is not my face! Destroy it, you'll only make me happy!"

The blood was oozing out his wound and his loud laughter made him look like a madman.

Silver Blossom's hands were sweating and said:"If you won't find it a pity that your face is ruined someone will. If I cannot have you, no one can. I will rather turn into an ugly madman than give you up to her."

She too started to laugh loudly and wanted to cut again. Suddenly the door was kicked open and Iron Blossom pulled her away from Yu Peiyu.

She shouted:"Eldest sister, come quickly! Second sister has gone mad!"

Silver Blossom laughed:"I'm not mad! Your perfect husband is! He says this face doesn't belong to him. I don't want a lunatic like him."

Chapter 9 : A Sudden Change

All of a sudden she stared behind Yu Peiyu and said loudly:"Look!"

Yu Peiyu turned around and saw a big door and there were characters carved next to the door.

The Palace of Enchantment, trespassers DIE

Yu Peiyu, Silver Blossom and Iron Blossom were creating quite a scene, fortunately Golden Blossom walked in and saw Yu Peiyu bloody face and asked with surprise:"What is going on here? Is this your doing?"

Silver Blossom laughed:"So what if it is, are you sad too?"

Golden Blossom slapped her on the face.

That silenced the laughter of Silver Blossom and everyone was silent and Iron Blossom let go of her sister.

Silver Blossom backed away from Golden Blossom and angrily said:"You hit me? You actually hit me."

Golden Blossom stamped her feet and asked:"Why did you do such a thing?"

Silver Blossom retorted with anger:"Why can't I do such a thing?!? You just know that Iron Blossom loves him but do you know that I love him too. Why can all of you have your perfect partner and I cannot?"

Golden Blossom said:"Didn't you hate him?"

Silver Blossom screamed:"Yes I do hate him! But I hate you even more! You just seem to care about Iron Blossom and not about me!"

Golden Blossom was silent for awhile and sighed:"I really didn't know. I really didn't know you are looking for a perfect partner. You have a lot men already, I never thought I would have to worry about your love life."

Silver Blossom was furious and stormed out the room.

Everyone heard her saying:"I hate you, all of you! I hate everyone in the world! I wish all of you are dead!"

Golden Blossom stood there and was speechless. Iron Blossom looked at Yu Peiyu and burst out in tears.

Yu Peiyu felt very tranquil and softly said:"There really is no perfect face in the world. That is something that old man Gao never would have thought of before.

I wonder what old man Gao would say when he saw my face....."

He felt that this was quite funny and laughed heartily. Somehow he felt relieved.

Iron Blossom stopped laughing and looked at him, she didn't understand his laughter. But who in this world can?

Three days later Yu Peiyu regained some strength. And he was feeling quite well but his face was wrapped in bandage.

You could only see his eyes, mouth and nose.

Iron Blossom and Golden Blossom looked at him apologetically. Golden Blossom sighed:"Do you really have to go now?"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"It is time for me to leave."

Iron Blossom hugged him and said:"Please don't go. I will always love you no matter how you look like."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"If you truly love me you should let me go."

Golden Blossom softly said:"At least let us see your face. I mean we can see how injured you are."

Yu Peiyu replied:"No matter what, I will always be myself, right?"

He gently pushed Iron Blossom away and

smiled:"Do you know what the first thing I want to do."

Iron Blossom said:"Do you want to look for my mean sister?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I do want to look for someone but not your sister. I want to pay a visit to young master Tang, and tell him to rendezvous with you here. I will also tell old Mr. Tang Wushuang that The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies are not that bad after all."

Golden Blossom said:"I don't know how to thank you."

Yu Peiyu laughed:"If you would let me go that would be thanks enough."

Golden Blossom and Iron Blossom didn't say anything anymore and saw Yu Peiyu off. They had tears in their eyes of gratitude, sadness and love.

Yu Peiyu opened the door of the secret tunnel and stood in the main hall.

However when he lifted his head he saw bodies hanging from a beam.

They were the servants of the manor and also the keeper Ma Xiaotian was dead now.

Some weapon had punched a hole through their throats and pierced a rope through the holes and hung them up.

He thought the killer was a ruthless person.

He thought of returning to the secret tunnel but it didn't seem like a good idea and proceeded forward.

He didn't want to go back and ask for help.

Suddenly he heard someone saying:"Who goes there? Stop!"

Yu Peiyu stood still. The voice said:"Come over here!"

Yu Peiyu walked over to the voice, it came from a different room.

The speaker was Jin Yanzi, he was surprised to see her here.

Jin Yanzi sternly asked:"Where did you come from? I didn't see you when I entered this place."

Yu Peiyu plainly smiled:"I entered via the entrance."

Jin Yanzi said:"Are you in league with the three flower ladies?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I don't think that is any of your business."

Jin Yanzi drew her sword and pointed it at the throat of Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu remained calm and wasn't impressed by that sword. Even if there were a thousand swords pointed at his throat he wouldn't budge. All the past events have made him stronger than ever.

She didn't recognize Yu Peiyu and his face was wrapped in bandage.

Jin Yanzi was impressed and stunned by his calmness.

She slowly lowered her sword.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Where is the young master of the divine sabre?"

Jin Yanzi was surprised and asked:"Do you recognize me?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Who doesn't know that the young master of the divine sabre and Miss Jin Yanzi are never separated."

Jin Yanzi stared at his eyes and said:"Your eyes look familiar."

Yu Peiyu said:"I am not the only man with bandage around his head."

Jin Yanzi sternly asked:"Who are you?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I am Yu Peiyu."

Jin Yanzi's face changed and said:"Yu...Yu Peiyu is dead already, you...you."

Yu Peiyu said:"Miss, you should know there are two Yu Peiyus. One is dead and the other alive. I just am a bit envious of the dead Yu Peiyu, he had a lot more friends than I."

Jin Yanzi sighed and asked:"Were these people killed by you?"

Yu Peiyu asked:"Did you kill them?"

Jin Yanzi said:"Although these men deserve to die I didn't kill them."

Yu Peiyu said:"If you didn't kill them then who did?"

Suddenly another voice said:"I did."

And a man appeared in front of them, this man wore a silver brocade and he didn't have a left arm.

It was an elderly man with grey hair and beard.

He had sharp, brilliant eyes and looked very fierce.

Jin Yanzi shivered when he looked at her and Yu Peiyu.

Jin Yanzi said:"These men were killed by you?"

The old man said:"You don't believe me. If you think I only have one arm that means I am incapable of killing, you are wrong. If I didn't deal with these men more evil will roam in the realm."

Jin Yanzi asked:"Sir, may I know your name?"

The old man said:"You needn't know my name. An enemy of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect is my ally. If not I will not allow you to live."

Jin Yanzi seemed to be convinced of the old man's words and didn't attack or retort.

She asked:"Sir, have you found the three flower ladies?"

The old man asked:"Do you have any unresolved matters with them?"

Jin Yanzi hatefully said:"My hate for them is as deep as the ocean."

The old man said:"If you want to find them, follow me."

The man walked out of Ma manor, Jin Yanzi followed him. And Yu Peiyu followed her.

He was quite puzzled because he knew that the three sisters were not somewhere else but right in Ma Manor.

Why would this old man lie? What are his motives?

Even if he was capable of killing these men how could he hang them up their with one arm.

With the old man's martial arts he could easily kill Jin Yanzi.

What is he planning for Jin Yanzi? The old man ignored Yu Peiyu and couldn't care less about him.

They walked via desolate roads and it was getting dark.

Yu Peiyu finally asked:"Where are the three flower ladies hiding?"

The old man said:"Evil people will only stay at sinister places."

Young girls are very sensitive to words like evil and sinister. She asked the old man:"Where is this sinister place?"

The old man just said:"If you're tired or scared you can just go back."

Jin Yanzi gritted her teeth and followed him.

Although Jin Yanzi's martial arts and art of levitation are very good she felt quite exhausted now. But Yu Peiyu could manage to keep up with this old man quite easily.

But he was getting more and more cautious about this old man especially seeing his level of martial arts was very high.

The old man climbed a high cliff easily, Jin Yanzi and Yu Peiyu were still standing there.

The old man called:"Aren't you coming up?"

Jin Yanzhi whispered to Yu Peiyu:"This is going to be dangerous, you should go now."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"I have come this far, it is too late to be afraid now."

And he started climbing the cliff, the old man was observing Yu Peiyu. Yu Peiyu knew the old man was trying to see what the level of martial arts was of Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu only used half of his internal power deliberately. The old man seemed to be disappointed to see Yu Peiyu this weak. Jin Yanzi did her best to climb the cliff and the old man looked pleased to see her level of martial arts was quite good.

Yu Peiyu found it strange that the old man was disappointed to see his martial arts were weak but happy to see that Jin Yanzi was strong.

If the old man was planning something against them he should be glad to see their martial arts were weak.

They now stood in front of the entrance of a dark cave.

There was a huge boulder blocking the entrance.

Jin Yanzi softly said to herself:"This is the secret hide-out of the three flower ladies?" She was beginning to feel suspicious.

The old man explained:"This is the secret cavern of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. The three flower ladies are elders of the sect, that's why they are allowed to enter."

Jin Yanzi asked:"How did you know this secret?"

The old man laughed:"How many secrets in the world can be kept hidden from me."

Jin Yanzi thought:Strange, I always believed that the Heavenly Silkworm Sect was located in the southern regions of China.

The old man said:"Do you have the courage to enter this cave!"

Jin Yanzi took a deep breath and said:"Even if I have to travel to far ends of the world I have to find the three flower ladies. I have to deal with them."

The old man said:"Very good! If you have the courage and caution I can guarantee nothing will happen to you."

Yu Peiyu said:"I am not going in there."

He wanted to say:"I know the three flower ladies are not in this cave. Why are you lying to us?"

But he knew at this moment he wasn't able to overcome this old man. He wanted to see what this old man was up too and tested him with this sentence.

The old man looked at him coldly and said:"You do not want to enter?"

Yu Peiyu replied:"I'm not looking for the three flower ladies. Why should I enter?"

Jin Yanzi quickly helped:"This matter does not concern him. I don't even know this man."

The old man calmly said:"If you don't want to enter I won't force you."

He placed his palm casually on the rock surface and left a deep handprint behind.

Yu Peiyu laughed:"Originally I didn't want to enter. But now I know this cave is linked with the Heavenly Silkworm Sect I would like to know a bit more about their secrets."

The old man ignored him and turned his attention to Jin Yanzi.

He took out a short sword and a flint.

He said:"This short sword is capable of slicing stone and iron like butter and this flint is also very precious. Protect them carefully!"

The old man gave the two items to Jin Yanzi and she thanked him.

The old man easily moved the boulder aside and said:"When you're done inside come back to the entrance and used the sword to strike at the boulder seven times. When I hear the signal I will move the boulder aside."

Jin Yanzi and Yu Peiyu entered the cave, Jin Yanzi used the flint to light a small fire.

The light shone on Yu Peiyu's face, wrapped in bandages, revealing a pair of noisy eyes.

She sighed lightly:"You're very strange. This entire matter doesn't concern you, why do you tag along?"

Yu Peiyu thought:Although she is very straightforward and even rash but she is a very kind and considerate girl.

He rather liked her at this moment, all the girls he met so far whether either quite strange, ruthless or even downright maniacal.

He smiled and said:"In these dangerous places it is better to be with someone."

Jin Yanzi was surprised and asked:"You..you did this for me?"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Miss, you're a friend of the late Yu Peiyu meaning you're also my friend."

She stared at him for awhile and blushed fortunately Yu Peiyu couldn't see her red face now in the dark.

After awhile she asked:"What do you think this old man is up too?"

Yu Peiyu thought for a moment and said:"What do you think, Miss?"

Jin Yanzi answered:"If he wants to deal with me he wouldn't lent us his sword and flint. Judging by that palm he can easily kill us both."

Yu Peiyu said:"You're right. The power of his palm was very strong but his technique was refined and gentle. His internal power has reached a very high level. He is certainly not inferior to reverend Chuchen of Wudang."

Jin Yanzi asked:"What could be his motives?"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Let us just go straight ahead and worry about that later. He won't remove the boulder now."

Jin Yanzi smiled:"I always thought I was very courageous but you are braver than I. Even if I'm afraid now I wouldn't show

it out of embarrassment."

The light shone on her face and revealed an open and cheerful smile.

Yu Peiyu thought: If all the girls in the world were like her there wouldn't be so much trouble.

Yu Peiyu lead the way and the fire shone on the walls and suddenly they saw carvings on the wall.

It was an engraving of a man and a woman making love. The engravings were very lifelike.

Jin Yanzi took one look and quickly turned her head away and blushed.

She said: "Such a disgusting place!"

Yu Peiyu also felt a bit embarrassed by it and found strange this cave would have such engravings.

Jin Yanzi quickly walked forward and suddenly in the dark two dark figures holding two broad sabres hacked towards Jin Yanzi.

Yu Peiyu yelled: "Watch out!"

During his yell he dashed forward and used his arms to hug Jin Yanzi. Both of them fell to the ground and rolled away from the hack and Yu Peiyu could just avoid the sabres.

The two figures returned to their original places.

Jin Yanzi exclaimed: "Only two statues."

Jin Yanzi said: "If it wasn't for you I would be dead now."

Yu Peiyu remembered she was still in his arms and he could smell her sweet fragrance.

Her lips almost touched his.

He quickly wanted to apologize.

But instead Jin Yanzi smiled: "If the young master of the divine sabre would see us now. He would be fuming. I really wish he could see this."

Yu Peiyu was initially afraid she would pout or feign anger but she was even more open-minded than he thought. She didn't even pretend to be angry.

Yu Peiyu was very happy to see her reaction and said:"Yes, it is strange. Why isn't he with you this time."

Jin Yanzi smiled:"He keeps following me around and gets angry when other men are talking to me. I'm so annoyed by him and this time I quickly ran away when he was not paying attention."

All of a sudden she stared behind Yu Peiyu and said loudly:"Look!"

Yu Peiyu turned around and saw a big door and there were characters carved next to the door.

The Palace of Enchantment, trespassers DIE

Jin Yanzi frowned:"The secret hiding-place of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect is here? And it is called this Palace of Enchantment?"

Yu Peiyu was pensive he knew that this was not only a sinister place but also very mysterious and the character enchantment was also puzzling.

He asked Jin Yanzi:"Are we going in?"

Jin Yanzi replied:"We're not going to be scared away by a few characters."

Yu Peiyu said:"What if the three flower ladies aren't here."

Jin Yanzi:"Aren't they here? Why would the old man lie to us?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"To my knowledge the three flower ladies are not here. And I'm not sure why the old man would lie to us."

Jin Yanzi was pensive for a moment and said:"What do you think, shall we go back? But I don't think the old man would let us go if we went back."

Yu Peiyu seriously said:" If we enter this door every step could be very dangerous. Perhaps you should stay here and I will explore it."

Jin Yanzi smiled sweetly:"You said yourself in these dangerous place it is better to be with someone else."

In situations like these the true nature of men will surface. Kind people will become even kinder and nasty people will become even more nasty.

Yu Peiyu held her hand and smiled:" Let us go! But careful every ste....."

Suddenly the floor cracked open and Yu Peiyu and Jin Yanzi fell into a deep hole.

Jin Yanzi felt a strong surge of energy passing through her hand and she was flung out of the hole. But Yu Peiyu dropped down.

Jin Yanzi stood near the hole and screamed:"Are you all right?"

It was too dark and deep to see clearly and she didn't know whether Yu Peiyu was dead or not.

Jin Yanzi was crying and yelled:"Why won't you answer me?" But there was no response.

She closed her eyes and wanted to leap into the hole too.

All of a sudden she was embraced from behind, she shouted:"Who is it?"

And she saw Yu Peiyu standing next to her.

She fell into his embrace out of happiness.

She was still crying and said:"Why didn't you answer me? You're very mean."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"I couldn't talk at the moment. I was clinging on to the wall with one puff of energy. If I answered I will drop down into the hole."

Jin Yanzi smiled tenderly:"I saw the flint drop down and I thought you were....gone. But now you're here."

Yu Peiyu looked at her and sighed:"Why did you want to leap down the hole?"

Jin Yanzi said softly:"If anything happens to you while you're saving me. I.I...don't want live anymore too."

But suddenly she laughed and said:"But I would have done the same thing if it was someone else who save me."

Yu Peiyu blinked his eyes and smiled:"Are you not afraid I will be disappointed by that final sentence?"

She smiled:"I know that a man like you must already have a special person. If I didn't added that extra bit, you feel bad, right?"

Yu Peiyu was very happy, he felt that Jin Yanzi was the nicest girl he had ever met.

She wouldn't pretend or feign emotions she was very open-minded and kind.

Yu Peiyu took her hand and said with a smile:"You're first girl I have ever met who didn't give me any unwanted problems."

Yu Peiyu drew the short sword and used it as an tool to climb down the hole.

It was a trap actually because at the bottom there were sharp spikes and Yu Peiyu saw the remains of dead people.

But some of the bodies were not decomposed in fact it seems some of these people died quite recently.

He picked up the flint and and climbed up.

Yu Peiyu told Jin Yanzi:"It is best that I should lead the way, don't follow to close if anything happens to me you can still get away."

Jin Yanzi loudly said:"This entire matter is not your concern. I should lead, don't treat me like a woman and take care of

me all the time."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Although I don't like to think you are a woman. But still you are a woman. And in front of women men like to play the hero."

Jin Yanzi smiled:"You're the most lovable man I have ever met."

Yu Peiyu lead the way again, but this time he was even more cautious and advanced very slowly. Both he and Jin Yanzi knew that this place was filled with traps.

A few metres further up ahead they saw two stone statues a man and a woman making love.

It was very lifelike both Yu Peiyu and Jin Yanzi blushed when they saw the statues.

Jin Yanzi grunted:"Why is this place filled with these revolting things."

After saying that she kicked the statues, Yu Peiyu wanted to stop her but it was too late.

A strange gas emitted from the statues, Yu Peiyu pulled her away and said:"Careful!"

But by saying [careful] he inhaled some of that gas. Jin Yanzi shook her head and saw that Yu Peiyu was sitting on the floor and was using his internal strength to counter the effects of the gas.

She cried out:"You...you...."

Yu Peiyu shook his head telling her not to talk now, Jin Yanzi kept quiet but was very worried.

After some time Yu Peiyu sighed:"Fortunately after all this time the effects of this gas aren't that strong anymore."

Jin Yanzi said softly:"Albeit the case but if I inhaled that poisonous gas that close I would have been dead now."

Yu Peiyu said:"Maybe."

She sighed:"You saved me again."

Yu Peiyu asked her:"Could you perhaps close your eyes?"

Jin Yanzi smiled:"Can't I watch?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I'm going to touch the statues and hopefully find the switch that will open up a new path. But I'm afraid the switch is not on a very proper place."

Luckily Jin Yanzi understood what he was getting at and closed her eyes.

Suddenly she heard the statues moving aside and she walked through the statues a path was opened.

When the light shone the path it revealed a series of tiles with a very peculiar motif.

Naked men or women engaged in all kinds of different sexual activities.

Jin Yanzi blushed again.

Yu Peiyu examined the tiles and said:"Follow my footsteps, don't divert."

His first step was on a not so proper place and Jin Yanzi followed his lead.

She pouted:"What is this horrible place anyway?"

Yu Peiyu said seriously:"The keeper of this place deliberately constructed this place like this. His intention to ward off the gentlemen of Wulin and continue his sinister activities here. Gentlemen tend to get quite embarrassed when they see things like this."

Jin Yanzi joked:"What about you? Are you a gentleman?"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Sometimes I am and sometimes I am not."

Jin Yanzi smiled:"You're not only lovable but also very cute."

During their laughter they suddenly saw a body of a dead girl. The body was hanging from a beam, it looked ever so eerie.

Jin Yanzi said:"Trespassers, die! It seems this person really lives up to these words."

Yu Peiyu concluded that this girl only died recently no more than two days. He found it odd that a cave sealed for more than ten odd years was recently visited by someone else.

After a few steps they saw another body another young girl was killed by a trap. A huge, heavy spear penetrated her body and nailed her to the wall.

Her hands were still clutched to the spear and it seems she wasn't killed instantly and was trying to pull the spear out.

Jin Yanzi shivered at the sight.

With every few steps they saw another body of a dead girl. Some of them were killed by poison, melting their faces away and some hacked by broad sabres.

Jin Yanzi shivered and asked:"This place is filled with dangerous booby traps. If you weren't here with me, my faith would be the same as these poor girls."

Yu Peiyu said:"They made it to here, that means some of them were very smart and trained in arts of formations and traps."

Jin Yanzi asked:"Do you mean they belong in the same group?"

Yu Peiyu answered:"They probably entered the cave together."

Jin Yanzi sighed:"These girls were young and pretty. Why would they waste their lives here in this god-forsaken place?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Although this place has nothing to do with the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. But there must be another concealed treasure here."

Jin Yanzi stopped and said:"So the old man is using us to open a road for him."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I think so too. That's why he hoped that our martial arts were good enough to survive the traps. And that's why he lent us his sword and flint."

Jin Yanzi angrily said:"If we succeed he will know the way in and get the treasure. It is unlikely he will share it with us. And if we fail and die it doesn't matter to him. What an evil man! We haven't met before and now he is planning to use us like stepping stones."

Yu Peiyu was pensive for a moment and said:"There is another strange thing."

Jin Yanzi asked:"What...what is that?"

Yu Peiyu replied:"Did you notice that all the bodies we saw belong to women. There isn't a single corpse of a man. So the hunters for this treasure are only women. But why?"

Suddenly a voice said:"There are several reasons for that."

When Jin Yanzi heard that voice her face changed and she clutched to Yu Peiyu's arm and said:"He is here!"

The old man calmly said:"I will enter this part along with you. Thank you for clearing the way for me."

Jin Yanzi angrily approached the old man:"

I thought you were a respectable Wulin senior, how could use us like stepping stones."

The old man said:"Although you endured some hardships on my behalf. But there will be some advantages for both of you. Even if you died here it will be for a good cause."

Jin Yanzi asked:"What is this place anyway?"

The old man answered:"Look at the bodies."

And he pointed at the characters next to the body of a girl.

The place of romance and passion, the palace of pleasure and joy. Even if the spirits will devour your bodies. But still ever so lethal, ever so vicious.

The old man explained:"Forty years ago all the handsome young men in Wulin would love to come here. Even death meant nothing to them."

Jin Yanzi asked:"Why?"

The old man laughed:"This place can give pleasures beyond men's wildest dreams. It is a pity that after joy comes death."

There was no joy in his laughter and it sounded even eerie.

Jin Yanzi trembled and said:"Why aren't their bodies of men?"

The old man said:"The men will die after they entered the Palace of Enchantment and after enjoying pleasure. The reasons why there are so many corpses of young girls are quite many. The keeper of the Palace of Enchantment was very beautiful, these women were probably related to the men who were involved with her. These women came her to kill her or were jealous of her."

Jin Yanzi said:"Even if that woman is still alive she would be an old witch. Why are there still so many young women who died here."

The old man said:"Although she is dead her secrets are still here. Her skills in preserving beauty and mesmerizing men are still wanted techniques by many women. If a girl can master these skills she can have every men she wants."

Jin Yanzi glared at Yu Peiyu and blushed and said:"I don't even want to look at those disgusting skills."

The old man laughed:"I'm afraid when after you have the manual you won't be able to put it away."

The old man looked at Yu Peiyu and said:"Your martial arts aren't good but you seem to be skilled in many other arts. I will spare your life."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Before entering the main hall of the palace you won't kill me."

The old man stared at him and said:"If you can help me enter the main hall I will even give you a part of the treasures inside."

Yu Peiyu said:"What if I refuse."

The old man said:"Then you will die now."

Yu Peiyu said:"What if someone already took the manuals?"

The old man said:"Till now no one has successfully managed to enter the main hall. I locked nine girls in this cave with the hope they would solve the traps for me. Unfortunately after two days no one came out of the cave."

Yu Peiyu asked:"You killed Ma Xiaotian because you were afraid that he knew this secret too and you feared he might tell others."

The old man coldly said:"You talk too much."

Yu Peiyu reproached him:"You killed Ma Xiaotian and his family just because you were afraid that he might know this secret. How very ruthless!"

The old man grunted.

Jin Yanzi loudly asked:"What does this place have to do with the Heavenly Silkworm Sect? Are you in league with them?"

The old man calmly said:"You talk too much too." He placed his palm on the wall for a moment.

Jin Yanzi looked at the handprint and kept quiet.

They now stood for the doors of the main hall. Yu Peiyu was thinking for a very long time on how to open these doors.

After some time he softly said to himself:"Could we be wrong? Where could the switch be?"

The old man said:"The switch must be here somewhere, there are no other entrances to the main hall."

Yu Peiyu moved the corpse of a young girl aside. He examined the corpse and saw there were no wounds on her body but her hands were as black as ink.

He examined her hands closely and found a small puncture wounds at the index- and middle finger of the girl.

Yu Peiyu stood up and said:"I understand now. The switch is on the two characters of on the wall."

All the other characters on the wall were covered with dust except for the two characters of.

Jin Yanzi said happily: "Of course! If we press on the characters of the doors will open, right?"

So she walked up and wanted to press the characters.

Yu Peiyu quickly pulled her back and said: "Don't! If we press the characters you will die like this poor girl. It is not worth it."

The old man drew the short sword and cut off the index- and middle finger of the dead girl and used the fingers to press the characters.

The doors opened and the main hall was decorated very stylishly.

I Would Like To Share The Ultimate Joy Of Life With You,
Enter And You Will Experience True Pleasure

These characters were engraved on the wall.

The old man was very excited and laughed: "Finally! The secret is mine!"

He quickly advanced in. Jin Yanzi picked up the two fingers and saw that there were another two small puncture holes.

She sighed and looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Again you saved me. I never would have thought that another trap was concealed in these small characters."

There were poisonous needles installed inside the characters if you touch the characters you will get stung.

Both Yu Peiyu and Jin Yanzi carefully entered, Yu Peiyu held Jin Yanzi's hand.

The old man said: "Half of this treasure is yours."

Yu Peiyu said softly: "This old man will not let me walk out of this place alive."

Jin Yanzi saw something and called out in excitement.

Yu Peiyu saw it too, heaps and heaps of gold, gems, jade, silver.

She turned to Yu Peiyu and said:"Look how beautiful these things are."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Do you like them?"

The old man laughed:"All the girls in the world love precious gems."

Yu Peiyu laughed:"It seems you have an interest in them too."

Jin Yanzi said:"That's different, men love gems, gold and silver because they are precious. But girls love them because they are pretty and beautiful."

She put on a pearl necklace and it made her look even more beautiful.

Yu Peiyu sighed and said:"How can those pearls match your beauty."

Jin Yanzi lowered her head and blushed.

The old man didn't look at the treasure anymore he was looking for something else.

Jin Yanzi whispered:"Is he looking for the manual?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I think so."

Jin Yanzi said:"But he isn't a woman what does he gain with those manuals."

Yu Peiyu said:"Perhaps his martial arts are very close to the keeper of the Palace of Enchantment. And combining the two will increase his martial arts. Or maybe he has a daughter...."

He was interrupted by the laughter of the old man. He had a manual in his hands and grabbed it tightly.

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply.

The old man said:"My wish came out! Why are you sighing?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"There is saying: When the birds are gone, the bow is redundant. My sigh is for a reason."

The old man laughed:"I said I wouldn't kill you and I won't. I will even let you have this treasure for your efforts."

Jin Yanzi smiled:"Sir, you're a man of your word. Worthy of being a Wulin senior."

Yu Peiyu calmly said:"I cannot enjoy this treasure when I cannot take it outside, can I?"

Yu Peiyu with or without intention blocked the exit.

The old man laughed:"Your martial arts aren't good, but you're strong enough to take a part of treasure outside in two times."

Yu Peiyu smiled calmly:"But if you would go outside and seal the doors I will be trapped in here. How can I move the treasure outside."

The old man was furious he never thought this youngster would see through his intentions.

He angrily shouted:"Do you really think you can stop me?"

His hand formed a claw and stormed towards Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu's hand hacked at his claw, the old man was surprised that he knew such a good technique. His claw became a palm again and pushed out towards Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu's palm countered the palm.

Both paced back three steps, the old man was shocked to see Yu Peiyu was stronger than he thought.

He viciously said:"I underestimated you."

He attacked Yu Peiyu with a series of ten stances, all his techniques were strange, lethal and vicious.

Yu Peiyu tried his best to counter those techniques but still stood in his way. Yu

Peiyu was still recovering and he inhaled a bit of that poisonous gas earlier.

He was feeling quite tired and had difficulty defending himself. He turned to Jin Yanzi and said:"Get out of here!" Jin Yanzi was shocked to see the current change of events but after a second she smiled:"Two against one mean old man, we have better chance of winning."

Yu Peiyu said:"Even with your help I cannot win. Just go!"

Because he was speaking to Jin Yanzi his concentration was diverted, he was pushed back by one step by the old man.

Jin Yanzi saw that Yu Peiyu and the old man were engaged in a fierce fight and saw she couldn't help Yu Peiyu out.

She sighed and pass near the old man and wanted to get out.

The old man used his palm to strike out at her, Jin Yanzi managed with effort to block that attack.

But she fell to the ground after blocking that stance.

Yu Peiyu saw a chance and attacked the old man with everything he got and asked Jin Yanzi:"Are you all right? Are you injured?"

Jin Yanzi felt numb all over her body and smiled:"I am fine, don't worry about me."

Yu Peiyu knew that she couldn't get up now and was feeling anxious because of this he pushed back by the old man's palm energy.

Jin Yanzi asked with fear:"Are you hurt?"

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and forcibly accepted another three stances of the old man. Both were still fighting.

Jin Yanzi cried:"Why aren't you talking? Are you injured?"

Yu Peiyu loudly said:"Don't mind me! I...."

When he spoke his internal power became a bit weaker and was forced to back away another two steps.

The old man laughed:"The two of you are truly two lovebirds. Still worried about each other in such dangerous

situations. I really admire the love between you."

Chapter 10 : Lovers in Peril

Yu Peiyu said: "I hope you can forgive me."

Jin Yanzi said: "I hate you, I hate you.... I will never forgive you. I know you don't want to harm me, but turning me down is the worst thing that could happen to me."

She didn't know why she said these strange things. Perhaps she wanted Yu Peiyu to come out.

Yu Peiyu wanted to attack the old man fiercely while he was talking. However he was at this moment too weak to launch such an offensive.

He was drenched with sweat, maybe if he now turned around he might escape. But he couldn't just leave Jin Yanzi behind.

The old man knew what he was thinking and smiled evilly: "If you don't return now I will close the doors and she will die alone in there."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Step aside! I will go in now."

The old man was pleased and laughed loudly. He stepped aside and saw Yu Peiyu walking towards the doors silently. But when Yu Peiyu passed the old man he viciously attacked the old man with his two fists.

The old man was taken by surprise and the force of those fists was formidable. He backed away a few steps, Yu Peiyu yelled to Jin Yanzi: "I will block him. Go now!"

Jin Yanzi ran out the doors but stopped again and asked: "What about you?"

Yu Peiyu was almost going insane. He wanted to grab her and shake her around and say: "You can come back and rescue me afterwards!"

Unfortunately he couldn't speak now because he couldn't even catch his breath.

The old man laughed: "Are you really going to leave him behind? Can you really be that cold-hearted?"

Jin Yanzi said: "I won't leave without him, I would rather die here with him."

The old man laughed: "That's more like it."

Yu Peiyu was furious, he wanted to kick Jin Yanzi out of here. Because he couldn't control his temper his concentration slackened the old man forced him into the main hall again.

This time he had no strength left to launch another attack.

The old man said: "Miss, would you please join this young man."

Jin Yanzi yelled: "I will go in! You don't have to remind me."

Yu Peiyu wanted to tell her to go back, but it was too late. She had already entered the main hall and embraced Yu Peiyu.

The old man laughed arrogantly: "I told you I won't kill you. So I won't, but if you would die of natural causes here that is not my concern."

And he closed the doors again.

There was an awful silence in the main hall.

After some time Jin Yanzi started crying and said with sobs: "It's my fault! Why didn't you run off?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Why didn't you go? You could always come back for me afterwards. Now both of us are stuck here."

Jin Yanzi was stunned for a moment but suddenly she began to smile.

Yu Peiyu frowned and asked: "What is it?"

Jin Yanzi said: "If you had thought of that, why didn't you leave and come back for me afterwards."

This time Yu Peiyu was stunned. He thought for a minute and smiled wryly: "I thought you were a silly girl earlier. It seems I am even sillier than you."

Jin Yanzi said tenderly: "You're not silly. You only thought of me, you put the lives of other people above your own. That doesn't make you silly it just shows how heroic you are."

Yu Peiyu was touched by her words and gently caressed her hair and said: "What about you? You only thought of me and forgot all about yourself too."

Jin Yanzi fell into his arms.

Yu Peiyu lost his mother when he was very young, his father was very strict. Although he was engaged he never had any intimate contact before with women.

He didn't know what to feel now, shock, sorrow, joy or love. But usually in situations of life and death like now emotions run amok.

After awhile Jin Yanzi looked up and blushed, she said: "Aren't we both silly? I mean the keeper of the Palace of Enchantment could probably open the doors on this side too. So all we have to do is find the switch on this side."

She felt quite happy about her own deduction and looked very pleased.

However Yu Peiyu sighed: "The old man knows where the switch is. And with his sword he must have destroyed the mechanism. He wants us to be trapped in here, so he must have thought of that too."

Jin Yanzi couldn't smile anymore and said: "But what about this treasure? Doesn't he want it?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "We can't take the treasure away. So sooner or later it is his anyway. He will claim it after he's sure that we have died."

Jin Yanzi's hope was gone, she sat there dazed. But in an instant she was smiling again and said: "This morning I wouldn't have dreamt to die with you here. But now I know death is not that scary. Anyway I am more fortunate than those eight girls, at least you are by my side when I die."

Yu Peiyu's eyes blinked and asked: "Did you say eight girls?"

Jin Yanzi was surprised to see him like this and said: "Yes, eight."

He held her hand and asked: "Are you sure? Eight girls? Not nine?"

Jin Yanzi thought for a minute and nodded: "Yeah! Eight girls I counted the bodies. What is this all about, eight or nine?"

Yu Peiyu loudly said: "It does matter. It matters a lot."

Jin Yanzi said: "But what? I mean those eight girls are dead."

Yu Peiyu said: "The old man said he lured nine girls in here and sealed the cave. With his eyesight and intelligence he couldn't have miscounted. But you only saw eight bodies, right? So where is the ninth girl? Where did she go?"

Jin Yanzi was still looking puzzled and said softly: "Where did the ninth girl go?"

Yu Peiyu said: "She cannot have disappeared without a trace."

Jin Yanzi nodded again.

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Don't you see? That ninth girl must have found another way out. She can't hide here, can she?"

Jin Yanzi understood now and jumped up and laughed: "You're not a bit silly. But I am really one very silly girl."

But they seem to have forgotten that if the ninth girl did find another passage, why didn't she take a part of the treasure along? But having a bit of hope is better than none.

The old man found the manual in a stone cabinet, he didn't close the cabinet afterwards.

There was a cushion in front of the cabinet.

Yu Peiyu remembered the trap door under the cushion at Murder Manor. He tried to remove the cushion. But in vain, the cushion was attached to a stone slab.

Yu Peiyu sighed out of disappointment but when he looked up he saw a series of characters on the cabinet.

Receive my manual and you will become my pupil. In order to study my skills first kowtow in front of my statue. Always listen to my teachings no matter what. Disobey me and suffer the consequences.

After reading this there were another series of characters:
After receiving my manual and treasure you should respectfully pay respects to me. Kowtow 81 times to me, and you will receive a reward. Disobey me, my spirit will come and haunt you.

The old man ignored these warnings, but Yu Peiyu knelt down and kowtowed.

Jin Yanzi smiled: "Are you actually on acknowledging this dead woman as your teacher?"

Yu Peiyu smiled and replied: "This keeper of the Palace of Enchantment was incredibly clever when she was alive. Her last words must have a deeper meaning."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "A woman like her must have refused to die peacefully."

Yu Peiyu agreed: "That is why I think she must have gone through a lot of trouble to carve this characters behind. There must be another secret contained in her words."

Jin Yanzi asked: "But what can a dead person do? Maybe.....maybe she isn't...isn't dead!"

After she said this, Yu Peiyu already finished the 81 kowtows. Suddenly the slab slide opened and Yu Peiyu slid down the hatch.

After the slide down he landed on something and that thing cracked open and emitted a gas. Because Yu Peiyu was taken by complete surprise and inhaled the gas.

Jin Yanzi was flabbergasted when she composed herself the slab returned to its original place. However Yu Peiyu was

gone.

She was scared and worried but what was going on here. She took a deep breath and calmed down, and remembered what Yu Peiyu did before he disappeared.

She knelt down and started to kowtow too. But when she reached 81 times the slab didn't move, she was puzzled. And kowtowed a few more times, after six, seven times the slab opened and she slid down.

Because she was too light, the mechanism didn't work properly after a few more kowtows it worked.

When she slid down she saw Yu Peiyu, he was sitting on the ground and was panting heavily.

Jin Yanzi was very worried and asked: "What happened to you?"

She walked over to him to help him, Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and closed his eyes.

She wanted to hold his hand but he flung her hand aside.

Jin Yanzi asked: "What are you doing?"

Yu Peiyu grunted: "Don't mind me! Let me rest for awhile."

He said those words with extreme difficulty.

Jin Yanzi stayed silent and she saw a stone coffin and another stone cupboard.

There were a few bottles in there and some of them were broken.

Further ahead was a door and it was open. That must be the exit out of this god-forsaken place.

Next to the bottles was a manual, Jin Yanzi picked it up and read it.

My secret manual, study it and master extreme joy. This is my true manual, only destined for the one fortunate girl. After one year she can have all the men she wants and three years she can be the most desired woman in the

world. The other manual was fake, do not study it or else you will be tormented by uncountable pain till death follows. I will bestow you this manual and numerous joy, never forget my teachings and words.

Jin Yanzi stopped reading, she felt that this woman was very cruel and formidable. She never dreamt of becoming the most desirable woman in the world in fact she felt that this manual was very revolting and wanted to tear it apart. But she couldn't bear it.

Suddenly she thought there might be a cure for Yu Peiyu in this manual.

She read on.

Within these bottles is a very powerful aphrodisiac, in gaseous form, liquid form or in solid form. If men take it and do not act on their desires, death will follow.

Jin Yanzi looked up and saw Yu Peiyu staring at her with wild eyes.

She became a bit frightened but also she felt quite warm.

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said: "Quickly go! Leave now!"

Jin Yanzi stared at Yu Peiyu, she couldn't let this young man die.

She smiled tenderly and walked over to Yu Peiyu.

She felt very weak all over, she felt a bit scared, ashamed, shocked but mostly in love.

Yu Peiyu shouted: "Don't come over!"

Jin Yanzi closed her eyes and fell into his arms, she was ready to sacrifice her virginity in order to save Yu Peiyu. But to her this wasn't really a sacrifice she was doing for the man she loves deeply.

She still had her eyes closed and relaxed, she was ready to accept his love.

But all of a sudden she felt one of her acupoints being sealed. And she was flung out the door, Yu Peiyu quickly closed the exit again.

Jin Yanzi knew that Yu Peiyu didn't want her to do this. She felt glad, thankful but moreover disappointed.

The exit was sealed and judging by it, it could not be opened from the inside.

There was nothing else for Yu Peiyu now but to wait for death.

Jin Yanzi was crying and sobbed: "Why? Why are you this stupid? Do you think I just did that because I wanted to save your life? I am very willing.....Don't you know that I love you very much!"

Yu Peiyu could clearly hear Jin Yanzi, but even if he was to change his mind it was too late.

He hit the sealed entrance and yelled: "You know, why I can't do it! I don't want to harm you."

Jin Yanzi could hear him too and replied: "But if you don't.....you will die!"

Yu Peiyu stammered: "I....I..."

Jin Yanzi was crying and said: "You choose death above me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I hope you can forgive me."

Jin Yanzi said: "I hate you, I hate you.... I will never forgive you. I know you don't want to harm me, but turning me down is the worst thing that could happen to me."

She didn't know why she said these strange things. Perhaps she wanted Yu Peiyu to come out.

Yu Peiyu felt he was on fire and shouted: "I was wrong! I was very wrong! I like you too!"

Jin Yanzi thought there was still hope and said: "Why don't you come out now?"

Yu Peiyu said: "It is too late."

Jin Yanzi was crying: "If you don't you will die!"

Yu Peiyu said: "Even so I thank you for your love."

His body felt like it was on fire, it was consuming him.

Suddenly the lid of the stone coffin opened and a figure stepped out of the coffin.

It was a young beautiful woman, she looked very cold and indifferent.

A zombie?!? And a beautiful one too?!?

She wore a white dress and she looked very pale.

She turned to Yu Peiyu and coldly said: "The two of you are truly devoted lovers in peril. After both of you died I will bury you together."

Yu Peiyu could now see her face, it was Lin Daiyu.

The nine girls locked here were all disciples of the Baihua Association. Lin Daiyu was the ninth girl.

Yu Peiyu asked with extreme difficulty: "Lin Daiyu, what....what are you...you...doing here?"

Lin Daiyu's face changed and asked: "Who are you? How do you know my name?"

Yu Peiyu replied: "I am Yu Peiyu."

She was stunned for a minute and regained herself very quickly: "Oh! You're that Yu Peiyu. Haven't you changed your name yet?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I am Yu Peiyu, why should I change my name."

Lin Daiyu coldly said: "I don't care what your name is. You will have to die, everyone who knows the secret of this place must die."

Yu Peiyu stood up and looked into the coffin and saw a corpse of a beautiful woman.

He exclaimed with shock: "Who is this?"

Lin Daiyu coldly explained: "This is the true keeper of the Palace of Enchantment. Even when she died she used different kinds of poison to preserve her beauty."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What about you?"

Lin Daiyu said: "I heard someone sliding down here, so I quickly hid myself. I also put the bottles of aphrodisiac there."

Yu Peiyu now understood everything and said: "Since when did you become so ruthless and calculating?"

Lin Daiyu scoffed: "Everyone in this world is selfish and vicious. In order to survive you have to become ruthless."

Yu Peiyu smiled tragically: "But I am your fiancé..."

Before he could finish she slapped him very hard.

She scolded: "My fiancé is dead, how dare you bring up his name."

Yu Peiyu felt nothing of the slap, he just had his eyes on Lin Daiyu.

He softly repeated to himself: "You're my fiancée...you are my fiancée."

Lin Daiyu got scared seeing Yu Peiyu in this state. She asked with a trembling voice: "What do you want?"

Yu Peiyu smiled strangely: "You're my fiancée...you are my fiancée..."

With difficulty he could use his internal strength to surpress the aphrodisiac, but now he caved in. He stormed towards Lin Daiyu, in his eyes this young woman was his future wife.

Lin Daiyu was scared and slapped him again and yelled: "Don't touch me! You're insane!"

Yu Peiyu didn't avoid that slap and continued to storm towards her.

Lin Daiyu used her fist to strike Yu Peiyu on the chest. But he remained unharmed and kept advancing towards her. She

got scared and turned around and ran.

He chased her. This normally very gentle and sophisticated young man became a beast now.

Jin Yanzi who was outside and could picture the entire incident and yelled: "Yu Peiyu, what are you doing in there?"

She could only hear panting now. She became furious and couldn't control her rage and shouted: "Why did you choose her instead of me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "She is...."

Jin Yanzi was crying again and said: "You said you liked me."

Yu Peiyu said: "I...yes, no....no...."

Lin Daiyu became even more angry and shouted: "You're insane! If that's case you should go after her instead of me!"

Yu Peiyu said: "I love you! You are my fiancée."

Lin Daiyu angrily chided: "Rubbish! Who is your fiancée?"

Jin Yanzi was crying even louder now.

This situation is too bizarre for words, even unbelievable. No one can explain it clearly, the three of them share a very unique relationship with each other. Love and hate are even more troublesome emotions.

Somehow fate has organized that the three would meet in this place arranged this bizarre incident for the three of them.

Jin Yanzi was crying, she didn't know why she was crying. Perhaps it was because she was sad, heart-broken and disappointed. Or the humiliation of being rejected.

All of a sudden she heard Lin Daiyu screaming, Jin Yanzi knew Yu Peiyu managed to grab her.

There were noises of struggling, cursing and panting. But after awhile the noises stopped.

Jin Yanzi felt even more sad now, she couldn't stand the silence. And her tears were running up, it was too much for

her to handle this entire incident and her emotions overwhelmed her. Jin Yanzi passed out.

After some time she woke up and heard footsteps.

She was quite happy and thought Yu Peiyu had come for her.

She wasn't a petty person and she could never hate a person very long.

But the footsteps came from her side and someone was walking towards her.

She heard a voice from the cavern next to her. If they opened the doors to this cavern they will see her.

Unfortunately she can't move yet, because Yu Peiyu sealed her acupoints.

A sweet voice said: "I must thank you very much. You're indeed a great craftsman if it wasn't for you I would have never found this cave."

The sweet voice sounded very sexy and seductive.

The other person replied: "Besides my two brothers and I no one can find this entrance as quickly as me."

The girl smiled: "Knowing such a talented man like is my luck. You must have many lovers. Why aren't you married yet?"

The man answered: "I am waiting for you."

The two of them were flirting with each other. If Yu Peiyu was here he would have recognized that voice. It was that mean Silver Blossom.

Unfortunately Jin Yanzi didn't know her and only found them very annoying.

She was also afraid that these two were sent by the one-armed old man.

The man exclaimed with surprise: "That's strange it seems that someone beat us to this place."

Silver Blossom responded: "That is impossible. Our father only told my two sisters and I about this secret."

The man replied: "It seems that somehow this secret must have been exposed by someone. We should be careful."

Silver Blossom smiled: "No matter who that person is. My third young master of the Wishful Hall will deal with him."

The man laughed: "I am only afraid of you. After you've learnt the abilities of the keeper of the Palace of Enchantment. I will be begging for mercy."

Silver Blossom smiled: "I will use those skills to serve you."

They opened a door and saw Jin Yanzi lying there.

Jin Yanzi saw a young man holding two short swords and a young pretty girl.

The man laughed: "Well! Someone did enter this place before us and a beautiful young girl too. Who sealed her acupoints?"

The man walked over to Jin Yanzi and used the tip of his foot to push Jin Yanzi.

He looked very frivolous, Jin Yanzi was furious.

The man laughed: "Miss, please tell me who sealed your acupoints? This fellow doesn't know how to treat a lady. Tell me where he is and I will teach him a lesson."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Young sister, this is the third young master of the Wishful Hall. He loves young beautiful women and when he sees them bullied he will certainly help them out."

The man laughed: "Aren't you jealous?"

Silver Blossom hugged him and said: "I'm jealous because I love you."

The man felt weak all over his body and smiled: "I don't need other women when I have you. When I think of your graceful legs....AHHHHHH!"

The man yelled out and fell to the ground, he never knew what hit him and why he was killed.

Jin Yanzi was stunned and didn't speak.

Silver Blossom walked to her and said: "Men like him deserve to die. Taking advantages of women when it suits them. Although if it wasn't for you I wouldn't have killed him."

Jin Yanzi was surprised and asked: "You killed him because of me?"

Silver Blossom said: "You didn't recognize me. But I recognized you. You are the famous heroine Jin Yanzi, right?"

Jin Yanzi nodded and asked: "Who are you?"

Silver Blossom sighed: "I'm a poor girl who nobody wants."

Jin Yanzi laughed: "You have a father and two sisters, you're not alone."

Silver Blossom started weeping: "Although I have parents and two sisters but they don't like me. And they are also very vicious."

Jin Yanzi frowned and said: "You just killed a man."

But she did feel compassion for this poor Silver Blossom.

Silver Blossom sobbed: "You don't know what I went through on my way here with him. If I didn't kill him I will never escape from his clutches."

Suddenly she fell in Jin Yanzi's lap and cried: "Do you understand now? Can you forgive me?"

Jin Yanzi sighed: "You're right some men in this world really deserve to die."

Jin Yanzi believed this treacherous Silver Blossom. If Silver Blossom meant any harm she would have killed Jin Yanzi on the spot.

However she will never understand vile and cunning people like Silver Blossom. Although Jin Yanzi has roamed the realm

of martial arts for some time now she is obviously no match for the cunning Silver Blossom. In fact she would be sold out by her in second and still wouldn't know what happened to her.

Silver Blossom already unsealed her acupoints and smiled: "Thank you for forgiving and understanding me."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "I should thank you for freeing me."

Silver Blossom lowered her head and said: "I...I...have a suggestion."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What kind of suggestion?"

Silver Blossom said: "Well, I...I would like us to become sisters."

Jin Yanzi was surprised and said: "We just met."

Silver Blossom started weeping again: "My own sisters don't even want me. I'm so silly to think that...."

Jin Yanzi gently took her hand and said: "Who says I'm not willing. Tell me what is your name?"

Silver Blossom smiled sweetly and said: "I totally forgot. My name is Hua Yinfeng (Yinfeng = silver phoenix). Please accept my respects."

She wanted to bow to Jin Yanzi. Jin Yanzi quickly stopped her and laughed: "I'm Jin Yanzi, a golden swallow and you're Yinfeng, a silver phoenix. It seems we're destined to become sworn sisters."

Jin Yanzi was an orphan and was very happy to find a friend and a sister. Little does she know that her sister is everything but a silver phoenix. In fact a fierce wolf would be a better term. She can and will devour this golden swallow whenever it suits her.

But what is Silver Blossom up too? I'm afraid only time will tell.

Jin Yanzi lead the way and both of them entered the palace again.

Of course Silver Blossom didn't ask and just listened to Jin Yanzi's warnings.

Suddenly Jin Yanzi was shocked to see no one was in here anymore. Yu Peiyu and Lin Daiyu were gone.

Silver Blossom had her eyes on the treasures in this room. Jin Yanzi softly repeated: "Where have they gone?"

Silver Blossom asked: "Who are they?"

Jin Yanzi didn't answer and saw that the coffin was moved. She took a closer look and saw the coffin initially blocked a hole. Yu Peiyu and Lin Daiyu must have fallen into this opening.

Also another two bottles of aphrodisiac were broken.

She instantly guessed what happened. During their struggle Lin Daiyu must have broken these two bottles of aphrodisiac too and inhaled it. So in the end she didn't resist Yu Peiyu anymore.

And during their struggle they must have activated the mechanism and opened another chamber.

Jin Yanzi told Silver Blossom: "I'm going down there to look."

Silver Blossom said: "Do be careful!"

Jin Yanzi smiled: "Thanks, but I have no intentions of dying yet."

She carefully slid down the hole.

And found out there was another secret down here. This was the real Palace of Enchantment. The place was beautifully decorated with fountains, carvings and paintings.

But there was still no sign of Yu Peiyu. But she did find the another exit, Lin Daiyu and Yu Peiyu must have left here.

She felt very sad to know that Yu Peiyu just left her here.

And started crying again.

Silver Blossom called out: "Are you alright?"

Jin Yanzi responded: "I'm fine. You can come down now." She wiped her tears and decided to pretend that this day never happened and she never met Yu Peiyu in her life.

However she forgot that Lin Daiyu must hate Yu Peiyu now. Why would they leave together? Have they resolved their issues?

Silver Blossom was moving the chests of treasures outside.

Jin Yanzi sighed: "How can all these treasures compare to that drop of dew on that flower."

Silver Blossom smiled: "But that drop of dew cannot provide us a good life and luxury. Not to mention with money we can force people to respect us and have fame."

Jin Yanzi said: "Don't forget there are many things in life we cannot buy."

Silver Blossom said: "Wait for me a minute."

She went away and Jin Yanzi just sat there waiting and pondering. After about an hour Silver Blossom returned with three carriages and two horses. There were also three men and Silver Blossom instructed them to put the chests on the carriages. The men didn't ask anything and only obeyed her every command.

Silver Blossom and Jin Yanzi both rode on a horse and went off, the carriages followed them.

After riding for some time they passed a brook, Jin Yanzi saw a white cloth on a stone. She got off her horse and recognized it to be the bandage wrapped around Yu Peiyu's head.

She was thinking: He must have removed his bandage here and washed his face. I wonder how he looks like. What was he thinking when he removed his bandage and saw his reflection in the water? Was Lin Daiyu with him at the time?

Doesn't she hate him anymore? Is he really the same Yu Peiyu? But that is impossible everyone saw the body of that

Yu Peiyu.

She angrily tossed the bandage away and thought: I must forget him. I will never think of him again.

They were headed towards the west, Sichuan province. On their way a lot of people recognized Jin Yanzi but none of them approached her and only a few just greeted her from far away.

She wanted to ask whether they had seen a young man with a wound on his face travelling with a young woman. But she restrained herself from asking.

Silver Blossom smiled: "Thanks to your fame we can travel in peace. Or else two young girls with three carriages will attract a lot unwanted attention."

Suddenly a horse rode their way, the rider was a young man wearing a fine brocade. He looked quite handsome and had a sabre in his girdle. It was the young master of the divine sabre.

Jin Yanzi quickly turned away hoping he wouldn't see her. But it was too late. He happily approached her and said: "Yan'Er, here you are. Why did you just leave without telling me? I have been looking for you everywhere."

Jin Yanzi was looking very annoyed and said: "Who told you to look for me?"

The young master of the divine sabre was stunned and puzzled and stuttered: "If I..I don't look for you...who should I look for?"

Jin Yanzi scoffed: "I don't care who you should look for! There are so many people in this world who need to be found, why don't you look for them! Don't bother me!"

She rode ahead ignoring him completely.

The young master of the divine sabre was stunned, his joy was gone now. He felt that she was even colder towards him

than before.

Why is that he wondered?

Silver Blossom turned to the young master of the divine sabre and said: "Sister is feeling a bit restless. Just wait till she is a bit calmed down and then approach her."

The young master of the divine sabre said: "Sister?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "Don't you like me to be Jin Yanzi's sister."

At this point the young master of the divine sabre noticed Silver Blossom. He was instantly captivated by her charm and stared at her.

Silver Blossom pinched him in the waist and said with a smile: "If you want to be my brother-in-law, you should befriend yourself with me. And listen to me."

She rode a bit further ahead and turned around and laughed: "Aren't you coming?"

The young master of the divine sabre followed without question and his disappointment was gone now.

Around noon they reached the FamilyYueVillage.

They stayed at an inn and Silver Blossom and the young master of the divine sabre were having lunch.

The young master seems to have forgotten entirely about Jin Yanzi. If Silver Blossom smiled he would smile, and when Silver Blossom asked him anything he would answer.

Silver Blossom touched his sabre and laughed: "This is the famous divine sabre, no wonder you're called the young master of the divine sabre."

The young master was very pleased and said: "Do you know how many swords, sabres and other weapons of famous martial artists were broken by this sabre."

Silver Blossom touched his wrist and said: "Please tell me how many."

The young master was very pleased and said: "About seventy, eighty."

Silver Blossom looked like she was very much impressed and admired him. She gently said: "With someone like you around I won't be afraid of anyone."

The young master's heart was beating faster and faster and didn't know what he should do.

Although Jin Yanzi didn't love the young master she was very annoyed by his attitude and behaviour now.

No girl in the world would like to see one of her suitors flirting with another girl right under her nose.

She couldn't stand it anymore and was about to leave and go back to her room.

The young master quickly composed herself.

He quickly said to Jin Yanzi: "Do you remember Yu Peiyu?"

The name [Yu Peiyu] had a very powerful magnet on Jin Yanzi. She immediately stopped walking and regained herself. She coldly asked: "Isn't he dead?"

The young master said: "One is dead, there is another one alive."

Jin Yanzi wanted to pretend that she didn't care. However she knew that she wouldn't be able to trick anyone with her facial expression.

So she stood with her back towards the young master and Silver Blossom.

Before she could ask anything else, Silver Blossom loudly asked the young master: "Do you know both Yu Peiyus?"

The young master scoffed: "I saw them both but I am not acquainted with people like them."

Silver Blossom smiled: "I heard that the dead Yu Peiyu was the son of the present chancellor of Wulin. He was quite

gentle and handsome, I wonder how the live Yu Peiyu would compare to the deceased one.”

The young master’s face turned red and angrily scoffed: “No matter what, the live Yu Peiyu is ten times better than the late Yu Peiyu.”

He deliberately was putting down the late Yu Peiyu, however Jin Yanzi’s heart belonged to the live Yu Peiyu. But she never guessed that both Yu Peiyus are the same.

The young master stared at Jin Yanzi’s back and loudly said: “This Yu Peiyu is really one handsome young man, although he has a scar on his face he still more handsome than the late Yu Peiyu.”

His intention was to make Jin Yanzi upset however at this moment Silver Blossom was fuming. But she didn’t show it, but Jin Yanzi was very happy and surprised. She softly said to herself: “So they are not the same person, like I thought. So he isn’t the fiancé of Lin Daiyu and his injury on his face isn’t that bad. So he is very handsome too.”

The young master loudly asked: “What are you saying?”

Jin Yanzi calmly said: “I had some questions but thank you for answering them.”

The young master was puzzled and asked: “What do you mean? I don’t understand.”

Jin Yanzi said: “It is best that you do not understand.”

Silver Blossom smiled: “Where did you meet him? We would like to see him ourselves.”

The young master answered: “Last night I saw him for the first time and I didn’t know he was called Yu Peiyu too. But I do recognize the girl he was with.”

Silver Blossom was quite anxious and said: “There is only one girl with him?”

The young master scoffed: “Isn’t one enough?”

Silver Blossom thought: Shameless little tart! Leaving behind eldest sister and....

She deducted that that girl must be Iron Blossom.

However the young master joked: "This is very funny. This girl used to be the fiancée of the late Yu Peiyu and now she is getting quite friendly with this Yu Peiyu."

Silver Blossom was surprised and asked: "Who is that girl?"

The young master replied: "The daughter of *The Flowered Chestnut Sword*, Lin Daiyu. Who else?"

Silver Blossom was very happy and laughed: "Wonderful! He does seem to be a playboy."

She was very happy because she thought Yu Peiyu dumped Iron Blossom for this Lin Daiyu.

The young master didn't know why she laughed but just noticed that she looked very charming when she laughed.

After a moment he continued: "I saw that Lin Daiyu wasn't wearing mourning clothes and was travelling with another man so soon. I always thought that she was a serious girl but it seems that although she has cold appearances she is no different from tarts."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Travelling with men doesn't necessarily mean she is a tart. I mean we travelled together too."

The young master was very happy and wanted to touch her and said: "We are different of course,...."

Jin Yanzi interrupted them and loudly asked: "What happened afterwards?"

The young master coughed and sat straight and said: "Then I saw them lodging at an inn and enter the same room."

Jin Yanzi scoffed: "You were spying and following them."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Why did you follow them? What were your intentions? Are you a voyeur?"

The young master blushed and loudly said: "I am not that kind of man! There was only one inn so I had to lodge there too."

Silver Blossom said in a sweet tone: "Don't get upset! I always thought that all the men were quite eager to meet tarts. And if they did they would want a piece of her too. But you are an exception."

Initially the young master was upset and angry but now his anger was gone.

Silver Blossom joked: "But did you spy on them during the night?"

The young master retorted: "I'm not a pervert, but it happens we were neighbours and during the night they were arguing very loudly."

Jin Yanzi couldn't help but to ask: "What were they arguing about?"

The young master said: "The first time I saw them; Lin Daiyu seems to have fallen ill. She could barely walk, Yu Peiyu was by her side taking very good care of her. He treated her with utmost love one would think they were a loving couple. I thought it was quite shameless of them. But when I heard them arguing I was very surprised too."

Silver Blossom smiled: "So you couldn't resist but to eavesdrop after all."

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Chapter 11 : Undying Love

The young master said: "Hong Lianhua wasn't the only one following Yu Peiyu and Lin Daiyu."

Silver Blossom asked: "Who else?"

The young master said: "After Hong Lianhua and Lin Daiyu were gone a girl appeared and smiled to Yu Peiyu. She said: [I knew someone would save you, that's why I didn't help you.] If this girl didn't follow them, she wouldn't have said those words."

The young master replied quickly: "I didn't eavesdrop, I just leaving my room and saw Lin Daiyu dashing out of the room holding a sword."

Silver Blossom smiled: "This Miss Lin is really strange, isn't she? Just recovered from her illness and instantly she wants to kill and fight again. Could it be that this Yu Peiyu didn't take good care of her?"

The young master answered with a scoff: "That Yu Peiyu must have taken advantage of Lin Daiyu when she was ill. Why else would she storm out with her sword and yell: Yu Peiyu, come out! Today I want to settle my score with you. It is either you or I!"

The young master continued: "At that point I knew that fellow was called Yu Peiyu too."

Silver Blossom looked at Jin Yanzi and laughed: "It seems that Yu Peiyu must have taken advantage of her. That is why she wants to kill him. Sister, what do you think of this Yu Peiyu?"

Jin Yanzi knew the reason for Yu Peiyu's actions and she didn't feel explaining it to others. Also she was feeling sad and melancholic thinking back to that day in the cave with Yu Peiyu.

She just coldly responded: "Why can't you keep silent and let him finish his story?"

Silver Blossom stuck out her tongue and didn't speak anymore.

The young master continued: "Yu Peiyu must feel bad about what he did so he didn't come out. She stood outside and cursed for some time and afterwards she went back into the room."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Was Yu Peiyu still there?"

The young master answered: "He just stood there dazed. All the people in the inn were aroused now and came to watch this argument. Most of them thought it just a quarrel between husband and wife and several people wanted to calm Lin Daiyu down. However she kicked those people aside as result the other people kept silent and watched."

Silver Blossom smiled: "She is very fierce."

The young master said: "She went in and started cursing him again. Her words made it seem like Yu Peiyu was the most despicable man on the world. Yu Peiyu just sat there and listened and didn't say a word."

Silver Blossom said: "As the saying goes: It takes two to dance. Since Yu Peiyu didn't retort, there really is no point in scolding anymore."

The young master said: "I thought the same thing, but she went on like a madwoman and in the end she used her sword to stab him."

At this point Jin Yanzi shrieked: "Didn't he defend himself?"

The young master glanced at her reaction and said: "He didn't even avoid her sword."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Was he seriously injured?"

The young master said: "She didn't want to kill him with one stance, so she aimed for his shoulder. Her second stance made a deep cut on his chest....."

Jin Yanzi interrupted him: "How could she hurt him like that?"

The young master scoffed: "Ohh, she didn't stop with mere two stances. She continued to curse him and her sword didn't stop stabbing or cutting him."

Jin Yanzi had tears in her eyes now and said: "Didn't someone intervene?"

The young master said: "The bystanders saw her kicking a few people aside earlier. They were afraid of her now."

Jin Yanzi angrily said: "What about you? Why didn't you stop her? Were you afraid of her martial arts too?"

The young master lowered his head and said: "I wanted to stop her, but.....but.....when I heard his name was Yu Peiyu too.....I.....I...became very angry and didn't want to be bothered by it."

Jin Yanzi screamed: "So you let him be murdered?"

The young master gave her a cold look and said: "Why do you care so much? Do you know this Yu Peiyu too?"

Jin Yanzi loudly answered: "So what if I do know him. What if I do have feelings for him? What is it to you?"

The young master was fuming, he raised his cup with a shivering hand and drank.

Silver Blossom smiled: "Did she really kill him?"

The young master had his eyes on Jin Yanzi for awhile and scoffed: "It is true. He is dead, killed by Lin Daiyu."

Jin Yanzi screamed: "You....you...you..."

The young master loudly said: "He himself didn't defend or avoid Lin Daiyu. He wanted to be killed by her, why should I interfere in this affair."

Jin Yanzi looked at him with disappointment, sadness and paced back to the door. By now she was weeping she turned around and dashed outside.

Silver Blossom was stunned for a minute but then she giggled: "So Yu Peiyu is dead. And was killed by a woman, I wonder how third little sister will react to the news."

The young master looked awful and he smashed his cup on the floor.

Jin Yanzi returned to her room and went to her bed. She used the sheets to cover her head and cried her eyes out.

She never thought that she would be this upset.

After a very long time she felt that someone was touching her shoulder. It was Silver Blossom.

Silver Blossom consoled her by saying: "Please, don't be sad."

Jin Yanzi thought she was her closest relative and embraced her and started to weep again.

She sobbed: "I don't know why I am this sad, I just know him for one day. I don't even know how he looks like."

Silver Blossom was surprised and said: "One day? Just one day?"

Jin Yanzi said: "Although it was only one day, it is enough for me to reminisce about it for the rest of my life."

Silver Blossom blinked her eyes and asked: "Did he treat you very well?"

Jin Yanzi nodded.

Silver Blossom smiled: "But the young master of the divine sabre is also very good to you."

Jin Yanzi said: "That is different, he treats me well because he wants me. And Yu ...young master Yu is willing to sacrifice his life just to save me."

Silver Blossom coldly said: "I don't think that Yu Peiyu is such a good man...."

Jin Yanzi raised her head and looked at her and said: "Do you know that he could have.....had me? I.....I.....wanted to be

with him but he didn't want to harm me....so...he....."

Silver Blossom shivered and said loudly: "He turned you down, perhaps because he looked down upon you."

Jin Yanzi shook her head and said: "No! You don't know...."

Silver Blossom scoffed: "I don't know? I know that he is an ungrateful man, you should hate him and not cry over him."

Jin Yanzi said: "I did hate him a little bit, but now I understand his intentions. He was afraid that I will sacrifice my own happiness and fortune to save him. He would rather have me hating him, rather to see me hurt. Just by this intention he deserves my love and I will never forget him."

Silver Blossom was stunned and scoffed: "If he would turn me down I would hate him for the rest of my life."

Suddenly the door opened, the young master of the divine sabre stood there, looking very pale.

Jin Yanzi angrily yelled: "How dare you enter my room? Get out!"

The young master stood there not moving after some time he sighed: "You don't have to be sad anymore. Yu Peiyu isn't dead."

Jin Yanzi asked: "But you...just..."

The young master answered: "I just said that to make you angry. But now seeing you this sad I can't bear to see you in this state."

Jin Yanzi didn't know what to say.

The young master said: "If no one intervened Yu Peiyu would have been killed by Lin Daiyu. But at the critical point someone quickly stopped Lin Daiyu."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Who?"

The young master responded: "Hong Lianhua."

Jin Yanzi said: "Does this Yu Peiyu know Hong Lianhua too?"

The young master said: "Although Hong Lianhua saved him, but he didn't know Yu Peiyu. He even disliked this Yu Peiyu, but he felt that this Yu Peiyu didn't deserve to be killed."

Jin Yanzi asked: "How would you know?"

The young master said: "At this time Yu Peiyu was bleeding heavily and sat on the ground. But Hong Lianhua just ignored him and went over to console Lin Daiyu. Yu Peiyu just sat there dazed."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What happened afterwards?"

The young master said: "Afterwards Hong Lianhua accompanied Lin Daiyu to leave the inn. If Hong Lianhua was befriended with Yu Peiyu he would at least go over and take care of his wounds."

Silver Blossom sighed after hearing this: "That the case, why did he save Yu Peiyu? This Hong Lianhua is truly a famous busybody living up to his reputation. ...But why did he stopped them at the critical moment. According to my deduction he must have followed Yu Peiyu and Lin Daiyu for some time."

The young master said: "Hong Lianhua wasn't the only one following Yu Peiyu and Lin Daiyu."

Silver Blossom asked: "Who else?"

The young master said: "After Hong Lianhua and Lin Daiyu were gone a girl appeared and smiled to Yu Peiyu. She said: [I knew someone would save you, that's why I didn't help you.] If this girl didn't follow them, she wouldn't have said those words."

Silver Blossom scoffed: "This Yu Peiyu really does have a lot of lovers."

The young master said: "However when Yu Peiyu saw this girl he was terrified and didn't take care of his wounds. He used his art of levitation to leave the inn. This Yu Peiyu has a really high level of this art even with injuries he was faster than that girl."

Silver Blossom asked: "Who was that girl? What does she look like?"

The young master said: "She wore a white dress, and was very beautiful. Judging by her martial arts she must be an expert too. I have never seen her before, nor did I hear any friends of mine talk of such a girl. Perhaps she is a new martial artist in Wulin."

He was still looking very pale and looked at Jin Yanzi in a melancholic way and finally he said: "I have told you everything I know. There is bound to be some special reasons, but I do not know them. I also don't know where Yu Peiyu went."

His voice became gradually more emotional and said: "If I would see him I will tell him to look for you. I...I...now know where your heart is, no matter what your feelings are for me, I will and shall never do anything to harm you anymore."

After saying this he turned around and walked away.

Normally he was quite obnoxious when around Jin Yanzi, but now he did leave with dignity.

Silver Blossom smiled: "Although he is quite annoying normally, he is quite a man today."

Jin Yanzi sighed after awhile: "He never harmed me, but I did break his heart."

Silver Blossom said: "I didn't know he was listening in on our conversation too. However if he didn't hear your words he would not have left."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "He followed me around because he believed that although I treat him coldly. But I treat other people even cooler. Now that he has heard me say that I love someone else. He has given up and I am also at ease that this matter is settled."

Silver Blossom giggled: "You shouldn't have given up entirely on him. You could keep him on a string for the rest

of your life and have a free servant. And the two of us need a servant like him.”

Jin Yanzi never thought of this crazy idea but she was too troubled to chide Silver Blossom. She just sighed: “I am very tired, I want to rest.”

However Silver Blossom didn’t leave, she sat at her bed and asked: “Why do you think that this Miss Lin would want to kill Yu Peiyu?”

Jin Yanzi turned around and closed her eyes.

Silver Blossom said: “According to me I don’t think this Miss Lin really wants to kill Yu Peiyu. I heard at least two strange clues for my theory in that story, didn’t you hear it?”

Jin Yanzi asked: “What are those clues?”

Silver Blossom said: “Judging by the way young master Yu treated Miss Lin, he would surely be cautious around her. And they were together longer than one day.”

Jin Yanzi asked: “What is wrong with that?”

Silver Blossom explained: “Just by that she could have many chances to kill him. Why would she pick a place like an inn? There are so many people there and she created quite a scene.”

Jin Yanzi thought for awhile and said: “It could be that she was too angry and couldn’t control her temper anymore.”

Silver Blossom smiled: “If a woman really hates a man so much that she wants to kill him. She wouldn’t argue or even talk to him anymore, but if they are arguing that means she doesn’t want to kill him yet. Sis, you’re a woman too. Do you think my reasoning is correct?”

Jin Yanzi thought for awhile and nodded.

Silver Blossom said: “Also if Miss Lin really wishes to kill Yu Peiyu at that time. She would kill him with one slash or blow. Certainly not the way she did it.”

Jin Yanzi said: “Perhaps she wanted to torture him.”

Silver Blossom giggled: "I think this Miss Lin isn't a vicious woman and if she really wanted to torture him she wouldn't inflict mere light wounds."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Why do you say that? How can you tell that young master Yu only suffered from light wounds?"

Silver Blossom said: "He used his art of levitation to escape from that mysterious girl."

Jin Yanzi pondered for a minute and asked: "What do you think the intentions of Lin Daiyu were?"

Silver Blossom said: "I think she deliberately created a scene for other people. It was an act to deceive someone."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What would be the reason for this?"

Silver Blossom shook her head and said: "That I do not know. Perhaps you would know."

Jin Yanzi coldly said: "I just know that Lin Daiyu hates Yu Peiyu very much. And she has her reason for hating Yu Peiyu if anyone in this world has a solid reason for killing Yu Peiyu that person would be Lin Daiyu."

But in her heart she knows that things are not that simple as it seems. In fact things are more complicated than she could dream.

The next morning Silver Blossom already readied the carriages and was ready to depart.

Jin Yanzi couldn't sleep the entire night when she heard some noises outside she put on her clothes and opened the door. She asked Silver Blossom: "Are we leaving this early?"

Silver Blossom smiled and excused herself: "I told those men to be quiet not to disturb you. But they are just so incompetent."

Silver Blossom said coldly: "Even if they didn't disturb me you would, right?"

Silver Blossom's face turned red, she now knew that Jin Yanzi wasn't that simple as she initially thought.

Jin Yanzi asked her: "Seeing you in this state I take it you already know where we should be heading for, right."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Sis, seeing that you didn't ask so I didn't...."

Jin Yanzi interrupted her: "I am asking now."

Silver Blossom said: "The two of us are traveling alone with carriages full of treasures. This isn't really a wise, so I would like to ask you whether you know anyone who could safeguard our treasure for the time being."

Even now Jin Yanzi knew that her new sworn sister isn't an easy girl to deal with. But she had no idea what she wants from her.

After pondering for some time Jin Yanzi said: "Asking someone to safeguard this treasure is still not very convenient. Even if you would feel safe, the protector would not find it easy to protect such a treasure."

Silver Blossom agreed with her.

Jin Yanzi continued: "However there is one place not far from here that is safe enough to protect our chests."

Jin Yanzi said: "The Tang Clan in Sichuan province is renowned....."

Before she could finish Silver Blossom happily interrupted her: "I have heard of the fame of the Tang Clan of Sichuan too. If we could put these chests there that would be perfect. No one would dare to steal from the Tang Clan. But members of the Tang clan are quite introvert, if we don't know them I don't think they will be willing to help us."

Jin Yanzi smiled: "Don't you know that your sis is also closely befriended with the famous Four Maidens of the Tang Clan. In fact they are my sworn sisters too."

Although Jin Yanzi felt that Silver Blossom was acting a bit too happy but she felt it was nothing wrong with that. She

just felt that her sworn sister was a bit too happy with this treasure.

However the reason why Silver Blossom wanted to become “friends” with Jin Yanzi was because of her relationship with the Tang Clan. If not for this relationship Jin Yanzi was killed by Silver Blossom in that cave.

Silver Blossom happily said: “Sis, if the Four Maidens of the Tang Clan are your sworn sisters. That means that they are my sisters too. I never thought that a lonely girl like me would have so many friends and sisters in one time.”

Jin Yanzi smiled: “The Tang Clan has very strict family rules, the daughters and daughter-in-laws have little friends in Wulin. I’m bound that they will be very happy to have a pretty and smart sister like you too.”

Jin Yanzi thought that Silver Blossom was a poor girl and never had so much precious valuables before, so it would be natural for her to put so much value on her cargo. Thinking of this she already forgot her caution towards Silver Blossom and felt rather sorry for being that cool to her.

So she became rather friendly and talkative to Silver Blossom again.

On their way to Sichuan province they enjoyed the famous scenery of Sichuan.

On their way to the Tang Mansion they saw a lot of beggars. These beggars were not even begging for money and even politely let merchants go first. They even looked rather proud and arrogant.

Silver Blossom said: “These beggars must know martial arts, could it be that they are disciples of the Beggars Association.”

Although she said it softly to Jin Yanzi but a beggar turned around and smiled: “Miss you should mind your own business and not interfere with affairs of others.”

It was an elderly beggar, although he wore rags and looked rather dirty he was quite distinguished and handsome.

Silver Blossom stuck out her tongue and smiled: "Sir, you have a very good hearing. Sir, you must be an elder of the Beggars Association."

The beggar turned around and looked rather annoyed. He looked coldly at Jin Yanzi for a moment and said: "I am not an elder nor am I any Wulin senior. Miss, you must be mistaken."

Silver Blossom wanted to ask something but the beggar walked to the side of the road and took out a gourd and drank some wine, totally ignoring the two girls.

They passed the old beggar before long. Silver Blossom whispered to Jin Yanzi: "This man really is hot-tempered. I didn't even offend him and he is angry with me."

Jin Yanzi didn't answer after awhile she said: "Further ahead is the Family Li Village, you can go to the family Li inn and lodge there. I will meet up with you there."

Silver Blossom was surprised and asked: "Where are you going?"

Jin Yanzi said: "I just remembered that I forgot to do something."

Silver Blossom asked: "Shall I accompany you?"

Jin Yanzi looked a bit annoyed and said: "I told you to wait at Li Trespass, within three days I will meet up with you."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Whatever you say."

Jin Yanzi watched till Silver Blossom was gone and the carriages were gone and turned around and rode back.

She rode back to the old beggar, who was still sitting next to the road.

The beggars of the Beggars Association always carried pouches on their rags. The number of pouches represent their status within the association, the more pouches the

higher the status. If the beggar does not have any pouch that means that disciple has just entered the association.

Judging from the posture and appearances of this old beggar he must have rather good martial arts. But the strange thing was that he did not even have one pouch.

Most of the beggars Jin Yanzi and Silver Blossom met during their way to Sichuan were travelling in groups. But this old beggar was travelling alone and looked very arrogant.

Jin Yanzi wanted to know where Hong Lianhua was, she wanted to ask him what happened exactly that day concerning Yu Peiyu and Lin Daiyu.

But when she saw that this beggar was looking quite strange she was very curious.

She gently approached the beggar, who was sleeping now, she didn't want to wake him.

Suddenly the beggar spoke: "The carriage contains valuable cargo you should go and protect your carriage. What do you want from an old beggar like me? Do you want to give me some money?"

Jin Yanzi thought: He has very sharp eyes.

If the carriages were loaded with gold and silver the tracks left behind would be different from the tracks Jin Yanzi and Silver Blossom's carriages left behind.

Any Wulin expert would see that in an instant.

Suddenly the old beggar laughed loudly: "The famous Jin Yanzi is waiting for an old beggar to wake up. If people would see this they wouldn't believe it."

Jin Yanzi was shocked and asked: "Sir, do you know me?"

The old beggar laughed: "I not only know the little golden swallow. I also know the old eagle."

The teacher of Jin Yanzi was the famous chivalrous robber Celestial Eagle Yun Tiechi. Yun Tiechi roamed and was renowned in the realm of martial arts for more than 30 years.

He made many enemies, in his final years he accepted Jin Yanzi as his only pupil. When Jin Yanzi left her teacher to roam Wulin, Yun Tiechi was severely ill.

Yun knew that his enemies were still looking for him so he sternly instructed Jin Yanzi not reveal the name of her teacher.

Even one of the most knowledgeable experts in Wulin like Hong Lianhua didn't know who the teacher of Jin Yanzi was.

But now she heard this beggar was able to call out her name and the name of her teacher, she was very startled.

She managed to put a smile on her face and asked: "May I know your name, sir? How do you know my teacher.....?"

The old beggar frowned and said in an aggravated tone: "If one does not want others to know your secrets, you should not have committed those crimes. Miss, do you understand what I mean? As for my name even if I told you you wouldn't know who I am."

Jin Yanzi didn't know why he was angry and didn't dare to speak anymore.

The old beggar looked at her and laughed: "What is it that you want from me?"

Jin Yanzi said: "I would like to meet your leader master Hong Lian. Sir, if you would be so kind....."

Before she could finish the old beggar angrily interrupted her: "You want me to lead the way to Hong Lianhua?"

Jin Yanzi saw the anger on his face and his sharp eyes were staring at her. She felt afraid of his eyes and suddenly the old beggar started to smile again. But when he smiled he looked very distinguished.

She never met anyone who would swift moods as quick as this man.

The old beggar laughed: "If you want me to the lead to Hong Lianhua, get on your horse and follow me."

Jin Yanzi was now very confused by his behaviour.

The old beggar started to walk away and turned around and loudly said: "I told you to follow me! Why are you still standing there?"

Jin Yanzi had no choice but to follow, she got on her horse and followed the beggar.

On their way Jin Yanzi saw several groups of beggars, but when they saw the old beggar they looked afraid. They didn't even approach him to greet him, furthermore when some beggars were talking and laughing but when they saw him they looked very earnest.

The beggar ignored the other beggars too, Jin Yanzi began to suspect that this man wasn't a disciple of the Beggars Association.

But why was he dressed like a beggar and why did he go the same way as the other beggars.

She began to regret her decision to follow him. This man was very mysterious, could it be that he was a formidable enemy of the Beggars Association. She thought that she was just looking for Hong Lianhua, why would she go with him.

She quickly rode the other way and left the beggar. She rode and rode till she lost all sight of the creepy beggar and even the other beggars.

When she saw that no one was around she was relieved and said softly to herself: "I..."

But before she could finish what she thought a cold voice said: "If you're looking for Hong Lianhua, you're going the wrong way."

She looked over and saw the creepy beggar standing next to a tree.

Jin Yanzi was startled she quickly rode the other way to escape from him.

After some time she was exhausted and her horse was getting tired. She stopped and rested, but the creepy beggar was there too and coldly said: "This is the wrong way too."

This man was like a phantom following her everywhere and popping up at nowhere.

Although she was a very brave girl she was getting really really scared.

She shrieked with fear: "What...what do you want from...me?"

The beggar looked at her and smiled: "You wanted to see Hong Lianhua I'm just leading the way."

Jin Yanzi said: "I...I don't want to see him now anymore."

The beggar looked coldly at her and said: "I told you I would take you to see him. Now you must let me take you to Hong Lianhua."

If someone else would say this to Jin Yanzi she would have drawn her sword but now she was too afraid of this creepy beggar to do anything let alone fight.

She even lost her will to escape and obediently followed him.

After walking for some time the creepy beggar turned around and said: "You must be regretful for approaching me."

Jin Yanzi gritted her teeth but didn't answer.

The creepy beggar continued: "But you should not feel sorry, because I was the one who approached you."

Jin Yanzi was surprised and asked: "You deliberately lured me to you? Why?"

The creepy beggar said: "I have my reasons."

Jin Yanzi looked at him suddenly her eyes were drawn to the eyes of that creepy beggar.

She wanted to avoid looking at him but she couldn't resist the temptation of not staring at those shining eyes.

Those eyes had a very powerful effect on her.

Jin Yanzi asked: "What are your reasons for luring me over?"

Saying this she broke out in a cold sweat.

The creepy beggar said: "There are three reasons. The first reason is because you're the only disciple of Yun Tiechi."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Are there any old grudges between my teacher and you?"

The creepy beggar didn't answer and continued: "The second reason is because you're looking for Hong Lianhua."

Jin Yanzi said: "What is there between you and Hong Lianhua?"

The creepy beggar ignored her question again.

Suddenly he smiled: "The third reason...hehehe... is because you're a beautiful young woman."

His smile was ever so eerie and disgusting. The creepy beggar now looked very lecherous at Jin Yanzi.

Jin Yanzi was terrified, she felt disgusted the way the creepy beggar was looking at her.

The beggar smiled: "You don't have to be afraid. I won't harm you."

Jin Yanzi stuttered: "What..what do you want from me?"

She was now wishing that she really had wings and could fly like a swallow.

Several times she wanted to look the either way but she kept being drawn to the eyes of the creepy beggar.

The beggar started to talk again: "I wanted you to look for me. Because I want to protect you and to take care of you."

His voice sounded very calm and soothing.

Jin Yanzi felt a bit tired and felt like she was asleep. But after a minute or so she felt awake again and said: "Yes, I want you to protect me."

The creepy beggar continued: "Now you realise that I'm the closest and dearest man to you in the entire world."

Jin Yanzi answered: "Yes, you are very close to me."

The beggar said: "That's why you will answer all my questions without hesitation."

Jin Yanzi responded: "Yes, I will tell you everything you want to know."

The beggar smiled: "Good! The first thing I want to know is, did Yun Tiechi leave you a martial arts manual? This manual contained a very ancient type of martial arts."

Jin Yanzi replied: "No."

The beggar asked: "Why?"

Jin Yanzi said: "My teacher said that only a few wise people in this world would be able to comprehend this martial arts. According to my teacher I do not have the potential to master this skill, that's why he didn't teach me."

The beggar asked: "Where did he leave the manual?"

Jin Yanzi answered: "My teacher said that the manual will only lead to more bloodshed in Wulin. So before he died he hid the manual somewhere safe. Only he knows the location of it."

The beggar asked: "Do you know where it is?"

Jin Yanzi said: "No, I don't. My teacher never kept any secrets from me but he knew it will be very difficult for me to keep the location safe. So he didn't tell me."

The creepy beggar angrily cursed: "Damn the old fool! After searching for many years I finally found out that you were his only pupil. I never thought he would do this. Damn him! He even took this secret along to the grave."

Jin Yanzi continued: "According to my teacher whoever manages to master this skill will become invincible. If the manual falls into the hands of evil men Wulin will be thrown into chaos. That's why he instructed me to keep his identity a secret."

The creepy beggar frowned and didn't speak for quite some time.

Suddenly he asked: "What do you want from Hong Lianhua?"

Jin Yanzi replied: "I wanted to know something from him."

The beggar asked: "What is it that you want to know?"

Jin Yanzi said: "I wanted to know what happened between Yu Peiyu and Lin Daiyu?"

The creepy beggar asked: "Why are you interested in other people's affairs?"

Jin Yanzi said: "Because I love Yu Peiyu."

The creepy beggar smiled evilly and said: "No, you don't love Yu Peiyu. You love me, do you understand?"

Jin Yanzi suddenly bursted out: "NO! I love Yu Peiyu! Not you! Not you!"

The beggar was surprised to see her fierce reaction, he took out a golden necklace with a black pearl attached to it. And held it in front of Jin Yanzi.

He dangled the necklace in front of her, Jin Yanzi became calm again.

The beggar said: "No matter who you love, I am still the closest person to you in the entire world. And you will listen to my every command"

Jin Yanzi said: "Yes."

The beggar said: "I want you to remove your clothes."

Without hesitation Jin Yanzi removed her clothes. The disgusting beggar admired her beautiful figure and body.

Suddenly he heard a noise coming closer the beggar sighed: "Unfortunately there isn't any time. Put your clothes on!"

Jin Yanzi put on her clothes, the beggar said: "You will now forget everything I just asked you. You will only remember I am your closest relative. I am like your teacher, your best friend and your husband."

He put away his necklace and clapped his hands.

Jin Yanzi woke up from her spell and softly said: "You are my teacher, friend and husband. But who are you?"

The beggar smiled: "I will tell you my name. I am Guo Pianxian, the oracle of Wulin. No one can match my talent in the world."

Jin Yanzi repeated: "Guo Pianxian."

Guo Pianxian laughed arrogantly: "I used to be an elder of the Beggars Association, a guardian of Wudang, man of wealth in the northern provinces. I was even the husband of Madame Hai Tang of the Baihua Association. I have many identities in Wulin. Sometimes even I am amazed by the many identities I have."

Jin Yanzi repeated: "Guo Pianxian, my husband, unmatched talent in the world...."

On the other side a large group of beggars have assembled. Their leader the famous Hong Lianhua was sitting on a rock looking pensive.

After awhile he asked his confidant the loyal Mei Simang: "Do you think he will come?"

Mei Simang replied in a serious tone: "The disciples here have reported seeing a man matching his description. Although they aren't sure whether it is him but he looks very similar. As instructed they stayed away from him."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "He has disappeared for about 15 years now. His reappearance is most strange."

Mei Simang said: "Don't you have a clue what he wants."

Hong Lianhua smiled wryly: "Do you think he wants to take over the leadership of the Beggar Association? I don't think so knowing him he wants something bigger."

Mei Simang said: "I never could guess what he wanted but I know only one thing. He will bring disaster along with him. No matter what we have enough men here to deal with this traitor."

Hong Lianhua looked troubled: "He is still an elder of our association."

Mei Simang said: "I know he is also a guardian of Wudang. Just by this he has broken a rule of our association. He can't be an elder of us and be a guardian of another Wulin school. Master, you could deal with accordingly."

Hong Lianhua still looked troubled and said: "But who can prove he is a guardian of Wudang?"

Mei Simang was stunned and didn't know what to say.

Hong Lianhua sighed: "This man has done many evil things in his life, but no one has been able to present evidence of his crimes. The first person who wanted him dead would be our late leader."

Mei Simang frowned: "What do you have in mind?"

Hong Lianhua said: "As soon as I received his letter I began to think of ways to trap him. But still no luck."

Suddenly they heard a tapping noise.

Mei Simang looked very earnest and said: "He has come."

All the disciples looked very anxious and they saw an elderly beggar walking in front of them now.

It was Guo Pianxian looking very arrogant.

Hong Lianhua saw that Jin Yanzi was with him and whispered: "Why is Jin Yanzi with him?"

Mei Simang said: "Most likely she has fallen into his hands."

Guo Pianxian walked over to Hong Lianhua and observed him from top to toe and said: "We haven't seen each other for many years. It is hard to believe that the little boy of then is now a famous young hero."

Hong Lianhua respectfully said: "Thank you, you're too kind."

Guo Pianxian asked: "Do you recognize me?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Although we haven't seen each other for many years. I still vividly remember the appearances of elder Guo."

Guo Pianxian now angrily said: "That being case why don't you pay proper respects to an elder!"

Hong Lianhua was taken by surprise and didn't know how to answer.

Mei Simang said: "Master Hong Lian is the leader of the Beggars Association. He needn't pay respects to an elder of the association. However elder Guo should pay your respects to master Hong Lian."

Guo Pianxian laughed: "You've become the leader now. Congratulations!"

His laughter sounded very loud and clear, the disciples were impressed by his internal strength.

Guo Pianxian stopped his laughter and looked at Hong Lianhua and asked: "Who allowed you to become the leader of our association."

Mei Simang said: "Those were the wishes of the late master."

Guo Pianxian said: "Show me that will."

Mei Simang said: "The late master didn't write a will, but his final words were that master Hong Lian would succeed him."

Guo Pianxian coldly asked: "Who were present when the later master died?"

Mei Simang said: "I was present too."

Guo Pianxian laughed loudly: "Just because you were there too he has the right to become the leader of the our association."

Mei Simang angrily said: "Elder Guo, what do you mean with that? Are you suggesting I am lying?"

Guo Pianxian said: "How dare you to speak in my presence? Who gave you the authority to talk to me in that tone?"

Mei Simang said: "I'm just telling the truth."

Guo Pianxian sneered: "Telling the truth! You're not fit yet to speak in my presence."

After saying this Guo Pianxian waved his hand and before Mei Simang could defend himself Guo Pianxian slapped him twice in his face and threw him aside.

Mei Simang is a very friendly old man and all of the disciples of the association liked him very much. Although most of them were afraid of Guo Pianxian's martial arts and fame. They were all angry to see Mei Simang getting mocked all of them stood up and readied themselves. Some of them even loudly questioned Guo Pianxian's actions.

Guo Pianxian loudly chided: "The two main criteria of becoming the leader of our association has always been prestige and martial arts. As elder of the association I have the right to investigate this matter. The rest of you should keep silent!"

Although his voice carried a long way, he couldn't suppress the anger of the beggars.

He turned to Hong Lianhua: "Hong Lianhua! What kind of leader are you? The disciples of our association are becoming more and more insolent!"

Hong Lianhua initially ignored the protests of the other beggars. But when he heard that Guo Pianxian addressed him he smiled and waved his hand: "Would all the brothers just be quiet for a minute."

His voice didn't carry as far as Guo Pianxian but all the beggars instantly settled down.

Hong Lianhua smiled: "The discipline of our association hasn't changed a bit. But the brothers here are not used to that elder Guo is giving orders. You cannot blame them, anyone who has left us for about 15 years has little power to order around anymore."

Guo Pianxian's face changed and said: "In order words they have forgotten about me."

Hong Lianhua said: "Not forgotten, but they all assumed that elder Guo left the association 15 years ago."

Guo Pianxian angrily asked: "What is the meaning of that?"

Hong Lianhua smiled: "The later master told everyone that elder Guo has left the association. All the disciples could clearly remember the words of the late master. I don't think you'll have any suspicions about that."

Guo Pianxian scoffed: "He didn't say that he banned me. But he told everyone I left. What a good friend he was!"

Hong Lianhua continued: "The late master knew that elder Guo was accustomed to a carefree life. Elder Guo is also not a person who puts a lot of value to a mere title like elder of the Beggars Association. With your martial arts and fame when the late master died you could have succeeded him easily."

Guo Pianxian laughed loudly: "No wonder everyone in Wulin praises Hong Lianhua. Not only are you intelligent but also a great orator."

Hong Lianhua turned to Jin Yanzi and said: "Welcome, Miss Jin. What can I do for you?"

Jin Yanzi said: "I'm here with him."

Hong Lianhua asked: "Miss Jin knows our elder Guo?"

Jin Yanzi said: "He is my dearest person in the world."

Hong Lianhua was a bit surprised to hear that and said: "Well, I never knew that."

He wanted to find out if Guo Pianxian has done anything to her but he was disappointed to hear her response.

Guo Pianxian said: "Initially I was afraid you were too young to lead us. But now I'm assured, you're a great leader."

Seeing that he couldn't win the beggars over, he quickly started to praise Hong Lianhua. This man is a true sycophant.

Hong Lianhua was thinking: He must realise not that he cannot count on the support of the brothers of the association. If you can't beat them, join them. What a piece of work this Guo Pianxian is!

He felt relieved now and smiled: "I'm most grateful that elder Guo has still the best interest for the association."

When he finished his sentence his eyes were drawn to the creepy eyes of Guo Pianxian.

He wanted to divert but it was too late.

Guo Pianxian smiled: "One man cannot perform all the tasks of our association. I think you want me back in the association, don't you?"

Hong Lianhua replied: "Yes, I do."

Guo Pianxian smiled: "From now on we will rule the association together."

Hong Lianhua answered: "Yes."

All the beggars felt strange that their leader would listen to all the suggestions of Guo Pianxian. But the rules of the association are very strict so everyone kept silent.

Mei Simang quickly shouted: "Master! You cannot listen to him! You must reconsider!"

Guo Pianxian sternly said: "This man has shown no respect to his superiors. He should be punished."

Hong Lianhua stuttered: "He....he...."

Mei Simang knelt in front of Hong Lianhua and said: "Even if the master has to punish me severely I have to say this. We cannot allow this man to have any power over the association if he does great disaster will fall upon us."

Hong Lianhua looked troubled.

Guo Pianxian took out his necklace with the black pearl again.

He dangled casually in front of Hong Lianhua and said: "He deserves to die! Issue an order!"

All the beggars were terrified.

Mei Simang kowtowed and said: "I am not afraid to die, but you must not let..."

Guo Pianxian interrupted him: "This man has shown disrespect to his superiors more than once. Also he dares to question the orders of the master. He has already broken the First and the Seventh Directive of our association. According to our rules he should die the death of numerous wounds."

*Note: Death of Numerous Wounds: the flesh will be sliced of the body bit by bit the victim will have to endure unspeakable pain before he eventually dies of too much lost of blood. Or simply when the unbearable pain knocks him out.

Jin Yanzi said: "Yes."

Her eyes were focussed on the black pearl too. Hong Lianhua said: "Yes, he deserves to die."

Mei Simang roared and passed out.

All the beggars were stunned that their leader would issue an order to execute Mei Simang. However no one dared to raise objections.

The rules of the Beggars Association were upheld always ten times stricter than other martial arts schools and/or associations.

The order of the leader was similar to an imperial decree, no one has the right to question it.

Even if the leader is wrong as a subject/disciple you cannot question or refuse the orders of the leader. If you do you will pay the ultimate price.

The reason for this is because the association was founded during the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms Period (907 A.D. - 960 A.D.). During that period China was thrown into chaos, the Tang dynasty had lost total central command over all regions. And warlords popped up everywhere.

The founder of the association upheld the principle of in times of chaos, extreme measures and utmost discipline had to be taken and upheld. This principle has been upheld by all the previous leaders of the Beggars Association.

When Hong Lianhua issued his order, Mei Simang was overcome by disappointment and anger.

Guo Pianxian smiled sinisterly: "Didn't all of you hear the order of the master? Where are the disciplinary disciples?"

At this moment four beggars walked up with tears in their eyes.

Guo Pianxian was still dangling his necklace. Guo Pianxian said: "Hong Lianhua, you can now...."

Before he could finish there was a sharp noise coming towards and before he realised what that was. The pearl was shattered.

Guo Pianxian stepped backwards and angrily said: "You...you....!"

Hong Lianhua laughed loudly: "Do you really think I will fall that easily under your hypnotic spell? Think again!"

Guo Pianxian angrily said: "Hong Lianhua! You had me fooled!"

Hong Lianhua laughed: "If I didn't play it that convincing how can I expose your evil plans? How can I present the

evidence of your wicked deeds to the brothers of the association?"

All the beggars were surprised and happy to see this change of events.

Mei Simang was extremely happy and shouted: "What the late master couldn't do, has finally been realised by master Hong Lian. Guo Pianxian's days are numbered, the late master can rest in peace now."

Guo Pianxian's face looked very pale but he arrogantly said: "What plans? What evidence of my wicked deeds? I don't understand a bit."

Hong Lianhua angrily said: "Don't think you can talk your way out now!"

Guo Pianxian scoffed: "What have I done wrong? You were the one who issued the execution of Mei Simang, now you regret that decision that is not my business."

Guo Pianxian easily put the blame on Hong Lianhua and made sure he stayed out of shot.

Not even Hong Lianhua had anticipated this, he was too shocked to retort.

Guo Pianxian loudly addressed the other beggars: "Listen to my brothers! Hong Lianhua said that I used hypnotic spells. Can he present evidence that I used this sort of cheap trickery? If not he is merely slandering me."

All the beggars looked at each other and were too surprised to speak.

Chapter 12 : Unexpected Mysteries

Hong Lianhua looked up and said: “Yu Peiyu.....Yu Peiyu....Why is this name filled with mystery?”

Jin Yanzi said: “Why...why won’t you ask me what happened between young master Yu and Miss Lin before they went to that inn? I do know a bit what happened between them?”

Hong Lianhua smiled sadly: “If one knows too many secrets one will only feel more frustrated. I already know too many secrets, I really do hope I won’t know anymore mysteries or riddles.”

Guo Pianxian saw that Hong Lianhua couldn’t prove he used hypnotism, so he scoffed: “Hong Lianhua, if you can find one person who can prove that I used hyponotism I will admit my defeat. However if you fail to produce any evidence you are guilty of slandering an elder of the association. As I am an elder appointed by the late master I can and will punish you for this insolence.”

Guo Pianxian was a sly devil and could twist and turn his way out of the most peril situations. Hong Lianhua was shocked to see this change of events and was thinking: I am wrong! I underestimated him, I thought I could easily expose his crimes. I am so wrong. What the master couldn’t do in twenty years, how could I possibly accomplish that with one mere plan.

Suddenly a girl loudly said: “What is this place? Why am I here?”

Hong Lianhua saw that Jin Yanzi woke up and was extremely happy and said: “Guo Pianxian, do you really think no one can prove that you used hypnotic spells to do evil?”

When the black pearl was shattered the spell on Jin Yanzi was also broken, she felt dizzy for a minute and passed out.

She now gradually woke up and was totally disorientated. Hong Lianhua asked her: "Miss Jin, do you remember why you are here?"

Jin Yanzi looked around and saw Guo Pianxian, she immediately shouted: "It's him, this monster! He used some sort of hypnotic spell on me and told me I was his lover, disciple and friend."

At this moment all the disciples of the Beggars Association were very angry.

Mei Simang yelled: "Guo Pianxian! Today you will receive retribution for your crimes."

Guo Pianxian saw all the surrounding disciples moving in on him. Guo Pianxian shouted: "What do you want?"

Mei Simang replied: "We are going to punish a traitor to the association."

Guo Pianxian scoffed: "You're not fit to judge me! None of you are! Take a close look at this!" He took out an old painting of a pair of dragon and phoenix dancing. There was a small row of characters on the top of the painting: Seeing this painting is like seeing me.

Mei Simang was shocked and exclaimed with shock: "Where did you get this painting?"

Guo Pianxian ignored him and turned to Hong Lianhua and said: "You must know who drew this painting, right?"

Hong Lianhua lowered his head and answered: "300 years ago, our founder patriarch Zhu drew this painting."

Guo Pianxian shouted: "Bow before this painting! Now!"

Hong Lianhua sighed deeply and bowed, the rest of the beggars had no choice but to follow the example of their leader.

Guo Pianxian was laughed loudly: "Even if I have committed a series of unforgivable crimes no one is allowed to punish

me. The only person who has the right is patriarch Zhu, but he is dead for about 300 years.”

Suddenly his laughter stopped and he looked very pale.

Everyone heard a girl saying: “I don’t belong to the Beggars Association and I don’t care what painting you have in your hands.”

Jin Yanzi had already drawn a short dagger and attacked him while he was laughing happily. When he noticed someone ambushed it was too late, the dagger had already pierced him in the back.

All the beggars were happy to see this, Guo Pianxian said: “I never thought I would be ambushed by a little lass like you.....” He waved his palm and hit Jin Yanzi on the shoulder. This wave was generated with his powerful internal strength. Jin Yanzi flew aside and fainted immediately.

Guo Pianxian held on to the painting and staggered away from the beggars, he laughed evilly: “With this in my hand, none of you can touch me.”

Everyone could see that Guo Pianxian was severely injured anyone could capture without any trouble but nobody dare to move forward.

Suddenly two figures blocked Guo Pianxian’s way, the first person was a young pretty girl and the second was a middle-aged good-looking Taoist priestess.

This priestess wore a yellow robe and carried a long sword on her back.

She was the leader of the Huashan School, the Lotus Fairy Xu Shuzhen.

And the young girl was her disciple Zhong Jing.

Hong Lianhua was happy to see them, Xu Shuzhen coldly said: “Guo Pianxian, I have finally found you.”

Guo Pianxian roared loudly and wanted to escape, Xu Shuzhen swiftly advanced forward and sealed seven of his acupoints. At this time he was already severely injured and couldn't even use 10 percent of his martial arts.

Hong Lianhua asked with surprise: "Master Xu, do you have grudges with this man?"

Xu Shuzhen sighed deeply: "Ever since the gathering at Lake Huang I have been tracking him. This man is the enemy of the Huashan School."

She waved her hand and Zhong Jin picked up the painting and presented it to Hong Lianhua. Xu Shuzhen said: "I'm returning the painting to you, but could I take this man away."

Hong Lianhua respectfully took the painting and said: "If master Xu didn't come, he would have gotten away."

Xu Shuzhen smiled: "More than ten years ago the late master of the Beggars Association already banned him. His ties with you and the association are severed."

Hong Lianhua said: "Indeed."

Xu Shuzhen said: "Thank you, master Hong Lian." And put her palms together and gave Hong Lianhua a Taoist greeting.

She turned to Jin Yanzi and said: "Thanks to this Miss we were able to capture Guo Pianxian this easily. Would you tell her that she can always rely on my help and the help of Huashan in the future."

Hong Lianhua smiled: "Miss Jin is very fortunate to receive such privilege."

With this Xu Shuzhen and Zhong Jin took Guo Pianxian away, Hong Lianhua went over to check on Jin Yanzi and was about to revive her when he saw another shadow moving by. Although the level of art of levitation of this person was not high, the posture was very elegant. Hong Lianhua frowned:

“Are you an emissary of the Baihua association?”

A young woman gracefully paid her respects to Hong Lianhua: “My name is Hua Xun, my respects to you, master Hong Lian.”

Hong Lianhua smiled: “Miss, are you here on orders of Madame Hai Tang?”

Hua Xun answered: “Madame Hai Tang wants to thank master Hong Lian for bringing back sister Lin. Madame Hai Tang also has a small request.”

Hong Lianhua smiled: “I’m happy to help out whenever possible.”

Hua Xun smiled: “This matter concerns an elder of your association, elder Guo Pianxian. He disappeared 15 years ago and has resurfaced recently. My eldest martial arts sister has recently seen him, Madame Hai Tang deduced that master Hong Lian has organised this assembly of beggars to think of a way to deal with elder Guo. Madame Hai Tang....”

Before she could finish, Hong Lianhua asked her: “Does Madame Hai Tang have any resolved issues with this Guo Pianxian?”

Hua Xun sighed lightly: “Indeed she has, when elder Gou appears could you immediately notify us. Madame Hai Tang is just around the neighbourhood and will come here at once.”

Hong Lianhua was silent for a moment and smiled wryly: “I am too happy to comply with Madame Hai Tang’s request. However, I am afraid you’re just too late.”

Hua Xun asked with surprise: “Has he been executed?”

Hong Lianhua sighed: “Would Miss be so kind as to inform Madame Hai Tang that Guo Pianxian is banned from our association. His ties with us are severed. He is being held captive by the lotus fairy master Xu, leader of the Huashan School.”

After about an hour Jin Yanzi gradually woke up. Hong Lianhua immediately said: "Thank you very much, Miss Jin for helping us. All the disciples of our association will remember your kindness."

Jin Yanzi smiled lightly and said: "You're too kind."

She suddenly remembered something and quickly asked: "Is that monster dead?"

Hong Lianhua replied: "He is seriously injured and is being held captive by master Xu Shuzhen. It seems that he and the HuashanSchool are mortal enemies. Knowing master Xu's character he will not live for long."

Jin Yanzi was silent for a minute and sighed: "To be honest I'm still a bit worried. Only after seeing his corpse with my own eyes I will be sure."

Hong Lianhua laughed: "This man has enemies through the entire realm of martial arts. Even if master Xu will spare him, Madame Hai Tang will surely deal with him."

Jin Yanzi frowned and said: "Madame Hai Tang?"

Hong Lianhua explained: "Madame Hai Tang sent a disciple to question the whereabouts of Guo Pianxian."

Jin Yanzi quickly asked: "You didn't tell her, right?"

Hong Lianhua was surprised and said: "Actually I did. Why are you this surprised?"

Jin Yanzi sighed: "I'm afraid that from now on the Baihua Association and the HuashanSchool will become enemies."

Hong Lianhua quickly asked: "How come?"

Jin Yanzi asked him: "Does master Hong Lian know what the relationship is between Guo Pianxian and Madame Hai Tang?"

Hong Lianhua frowned and said: "I don't know."

Jin Yanzi said: "Doesn't anybody know that they are husband and wife?"

Hong Lianhua was surprised and exclaimed with shock: “Husband and wife?”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “Even if there are some misunderstandings between Guo Pianxian and Madame Hai Tang, she will not allow him to die at the hands of others. It is likely she has now become the enemy of master Xu and the Huashan School.”

Hong Lianhua sighed: “No wonder Hua Xun quickly left when she heard the whereabouts of Guo Pianxian. Both Madame Hai Tang and master Xu are formidable women in Wulin. If the two of them really would fight each other things will really get out of hand.”

Jin Yanzi said: “What’s done is done. By the way the reason why I came to look for master Hong Lian is, that I want to ask you something.”

Hong Lianhua laughed: “Whatever you want to know I will gladly share it with you, Miss Jin.”

Jin Yanzi lowered her head and said: “Could perhaps tell me what precisely happened between Miss Lin Daiyu and young master Yu in that inn the other night?”

Hong Lianhua’s face changed a bit and sighed: “May I ask why Miss wants to know about this matter?”

Jin Yanzi smiled wryly: “I hope you can tell me what happened. I would rather not tell why I’m interested in this matter.”

Hong Lianhua was silent for some time and sighed: “That day I was at that little village too and I saw Miss Lin Daiyu travelling with another young man. Because I know Miss Lin I went over to greet them.”

Jin Yanzi said: “Master Hong Lian, you were close friends with the late Yu Peiyu, I think you must have felt a bit angry when you saw Miss Lin travelling with another young man.”

Hong Lianhua was surprised by this question and laughed: “No, you are wrong. I am not a conservative man,

furthermore Miss Lin wasn't not even married to the late young master Yu. And even if they were married I don't expect her to stay a widow for the rest of her life. If she has met another person. As a friend I'm very happy for her."

Although he was laughing, there was no joy in his voice. In fact he sounded rather sad.

Jin Yanzi didn't hear that but smiled: "Master Hong Lian is indeed an open-minded man. I do apologize for my words."

Hong Lianhua smiled too and continued: "When I walked over to greet them, the young man seemed to be quite pleased still didn't speak but Miss Lin ignored me. Which was strange because we've known each other for a long time."

Jin Yanzi said: "Perhaps she was a bit angry that day."

Hong Lianhua said: "Possibly, but I remember about a month ago she did a similar thing. At that time she was in a dangerous position and ignored me with a purpose."

Jin Yanzi said: "So you suspected there was something amiss too this time."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "Indeed."

Jin Yanzi said: "That's why master Hong Lian went over that evening to investigate."

Mei Simang who never left Hong Lianhua suddenly spoke: "Miss Jin, you're right. If someone else who saw a similar situation would certainly investigate this matter in the evening. Even if this matter concerns some private matters of young women. But Miss shouldn't forget that master Hong Lian is the leader of our association. His status is not the same as all and sundry, so he couldn't just go and investigate."

Jin Yanzi's face turned red and said: "I'm sorry. So master Hong Lian didn't go and investigate?"

Mei Simang said: "Master Hong Lian was very worried about the safety of his friends. So being careful he still had to look into this matter with precision."

Jin Yanzi smiled: "Master Hong Lian is a true righteous friend, everyone in Wulin knows that. Elder Mei doesn't have to remind me of that."

Mei Simang's face turned red and continued: "Master Hong Lian instructed a disciple to disguise himself as a waiter in the inn. And told him to observe the room of Miss Lin."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What time was it?"

Mei Simang looked at Hong Lianhua first and saw that Hong Lianhua nodded and replied: "Around dusk....."

Jin Yanzi smiled: "Master Hong Lian, if it is not too much to ask could you tell me what happened? Because if every time elder Mei has to ask for your permission to reveal something it will take forever when he is done."

Mei Simang laughed loudly: "Jin Yanzi is truly a very straightforward heroine. I just offended Miss Jin without intention and still Miss Jin is able to get back at me."

He bowed to Jin Yanzi and remained silent.

Jin Yanzi said: "Master Hong Lian, you have a very loyal confidant. But what did the disciple see?"

Hong Lianhua said: "He saw that Miss Lin looked very angry and totally ignored him."

Jin Yanzi said: "But why would she pay attention to a waiter?"

Hong Lianhua explained: "She knew that disciple, a month ago the same disciple went over in a disguise to make contact with her."

Hong Lianhua continued: "So this time I believed her situation must be more dangerous than the last time."

Jin Yanzi said: "Perhaps she wasn't in any danger that's why she didn't pass any message to that disciple."

Hong Lianhua said: "If that's the case why didn't she greet me when she saw me."

Jin Yanzi said: "Perhaps she was feeling not too comfortable in greeting you while someone else was around?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Impossible."

Jin Yanzi looked at him for awhile: "You're very confident."

Hong Lianhua said: "Yes."

Jin Yanzi smiled: "You must be very close to Miss Lin, right? No wonder you're so concerned about her safety."

Hong Lianhua's face changed a bit but smiled too: "Seeing that Miss Jin is so concerned too about this matter and Miss Jin is defending young master Yu all the time. I take it you must be very close to him too."

Jin Yanzi was stunned for a moment and laughed: "Master Hong Lian is a very formidable person."

Hong Lianhua laughed too, but their laughter seemed to a bit artificial. Although both of them were very open persons, they had very deep emotional issues to deal with.

Hong Lianhua said: "That disciple, Song Si entered the room twice. The second time he saw that Miss Lin was crying softly and used the sheets to cover her head. And young master Yu had his back to Song Si all the time. It seems that he didn't want anyone to see his face. When Song Si reported what he saw to me, I was thinking about whether I should go myself. During this time I noticed a few dark figures passing by, judging from the movements they were martial arts experts. And they were heading to the inn too so I followed them."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Do you know who these men were?"

Hong Lianhua said: "All of them wore black robes and used a black cloth to cover their faces. However I managed to identify at least one of them by his martial arts. That was Ximen Ruo."

Jin Yanzi said: "But why would Ximen Feng and others follow them?"

Hong Lianhua sighed deeply: "Concerning this matter I cannot reveal too much. But I can tell you that because because Miss Lin is the fiancée of my late brother Yu. They will investigate and follow every person close to him."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "This matter is becoming more and more complicated."

Hong Lianhua sighed: "This entire incident is all connected to a big mystery. Miss Jin is the benefactress of our association that's why I am revealing this secret to you."

Jin Yanzi said: "I will keep this a secret. No matter whether this concerns the late Yu Peiyu or the live Yu Peiyu I will promise I won't reveal a word to anyone."

Hong Lianhua continued: "That night those men in black robes surrounded the inn and that Ximen Feng silently sneaked into the inn to spy on them."

Jin Yanzi said: "Were they plotting something against Miss Lin?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Yes, they were."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What were they planning?"

Hong Lianhua didn't say anything for some time.

Jin Yanzi loudly said: "No matter what! For Yu Peiyu I will never reveal a word to anyone. I will rather die!"

Hong Lianhua said: "They were ordered to to bring back Miss Lin. If they cannot bring her back alive, they will have to bring back her corpse."

Jin Yanzi was surprised and asked: "Why?"

Hong Lianhua said with a smile: "This doesn't really concern that incident."

Jin Yanzi said: "But Ximen Feng and Lin Shoujuan are close friends if Ximen Feng killed Miss Lin the Flowered Chestnut

Sword will surely avenge his daughter.”

Hong Lianhua said: “A lot of strange things are happening lately. These people wanted to deal with Miss Lin for a long time. Luckily she was saved by Madame Hai Tang. But they will not leave her alone whenever she is alone they will and shall try to harm her.”

Jin Yanzi asked: “Why didn’t they attack Miss Lin that night?”

Hong Lianhua said: “Perhaps they were a bit afraid of young master Yu, or perhaps they wanted to see what the relationship was between Miss Lin and this Yu Peiyu. These people are still very suspicious about my late brother Yu, but they are also suspicious about the live Yu Peiyu. They think that he is still alive and both Yu Peiyus are the same person. And because Miss Lin is travelling with him makes them more suspicious.”

Jin Yanzi asked: “Master Hong Lian, are you also thinking that both young masters Yu are the same person?”

Hong Lianhua shook his head: “Brother Yu is dead, if this young master Yu is my brother Yu he wouldn’t just ignore me.”

Jin Yanzi was silent and said: “Both young masters Yu are truly good friends.”

Hong Lianhua said: “I know that those five men were good martial artists and I was worried about the safety of Miss Lin. But I couldn’t attack them first without knowing their intentions. So I stayed behind them and observed their movements.”

Jin Yanzi asked: “Was there anything happening in Miss Lin’s room?”

Hong Lianhua said: “There was nothing happening in the room but the candles were still burning. I thought they had already slept. However suddenly Miss Lin stormed out and started cursing and so.”

Jin Yanzi loudly said: "Now I understand. She was deliberately creating a scene because she noticed someone was spying on them. The commotion attracted a lot of attention so those five men couldn't go through with their planned attack."

Hong Lianhua said: "Miss Lin has always been a very careful and vigilant person. So your deduction could be right, but although the arguing part could be an act but she did use her sword to stab this young master Yu."

Jin Yanzi said: "But she didn't really injure him severely, right?"

Hong Lianhua said: "His wounds were not too light but also not too deep. Miss Lin did the wrong thing by creating a scene. Because these five men were a bit afraid of this young master Yu. But now seeing the two of them weren't friends and one was wounded they instantly wanted to come out."

Jin Yanzi said: "But those people in the inn..."

Hong Lianhua said: "They will not have any reservations because of a few bystanders."

Jin Yanzi said: "So that's why master Hong Lian came out to stop Miss Lin. In fact you wanted to stop those men from taking actions. Everyone thought that master Hong Lian saved young master Yu, but in fact you saved Miss Lin."

Jin Yanzi continued: "The deduction I made earlier is also wrong. So Miss Lin really did want to kill young master Yu. Because if she knew she was in danger she wouldn't have stabbed him. I mean she needed all the help she could have."

Hong Lianhua said: "I don't think so. She could have known that I was around to save her."

Jin Yanzi asked: "But why did she ignore you all the time?"

Hong Lianhua said: "Perhaps she was afraid these five men would think this young master Yu was my late brother Yu."

She wounded him for the purpose of protecting him from those men.”

After saying this he slightly trembled.

Jin Yanzi said: “In other words she injured in order to save him.”

Hong Lianhua sighed: “But that is my deduction.”

Jin Yanzi asked: “Didn’t you ask her when you saved her?”

Hong Lianhua sighed: “What right do I have to question her.”

Jin Yanzi was silent and looked at Hong Lianhua for a moment. She smiled: “Don’t worry she won’t have any feelings for this young master Yu. In fact I think she really might want to kill him.”

Hong Lianhua felt a bit awkward and said: “Why...why should I not worry.”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “You cannot fool me; I know what your feelings are for Miss Lin. Does she know your feelings for her?”

Hong Lianhua laughed but looked very sad: “No matter what she is the fiancée of my brother Yu.”

Jin Yanzi said: “But Yu Peiyu is dead.”

Hong Lianhua said: “He is always alive in my heart.”

Jin Yanzi said: “Because of him you’re willing to put aside your feelings for Miss Lin for the rest of your life. I think Yu Peiyu would want you to comfort Miss Lin.”

Hong Lianhua loudly said: “She doesn’t need comforting.”

Jin Yanzi said: “You’re wrong; she needs someone to comfort her. And that person is you.”

Hong Lianhua looked at her for some time and scoffed: “You want me to comfort Miss Lin because you’re afraid she will steal your young master Yu away from you. You hope she will

hate him and even perhaps you wish she really does kill him. You would rather see him dead than seeing them together.”

Jin Yanzi trembled and lowered her head and said in a sad tone: “You’re right. Absolutely right. I am a very selfish person.”

She started to weep.

Hong Lianhua felt sorry for the way he talked to her and said apologetically: “Who is not selfish when it comes to love.”

Jin Yanzi looked up and said: “You’re not selfish. You’re willing to give up your happiness for the one you love. And you don’t expect people will know about your sacrifice. Why can’t I be more like you? Why? Why?”

Hong Lianhua didn’t know what to say, but he was hurting too now when he heard Jin Yanzi’s words.

He quickly changed the subject and asked: “Miss Jin, I have a few questions for you?”

Jin Yanzi said: “I will be happy to answer your questions.”

Hong Lianhua asked: “How come you knew of that incident at the inn?”

Jin Yanzi wiped her tears and said: “That night Sima Bin (The young master of the Divine Sabre) was at the inn too. Didn’t master Hong Lian see him?”

Hong Lianhua was surprised and said: “He was there too? I didn’t see him.”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “When he told me what he saw I thought it was not so complicated but after hearing your detailed story about what transpired I’m even more confused.”

Hong Lianhua said: “I’m confused too about the entire situation. I had my attention on Ximen Feng and others; I didn’t noticed the young master of the divine sabre. I’m not surprised if there were others lurking about too at that time.”

Jin Yanzi said: "There was another person observing the entire incident."

Hong Lianhua asked with utmost surprise: "Who?"

Jin Yanzi replied: "A mysterious young woman but when young master Yu saw her he immediately ran off."

Hong Lianhua asked: "Who was that woman? Why was Yu Peiyu afraid of her?"

Jin Yanzi sighed: "I'm afraid only young master Yu knows that secret."

Hong Lianhua looked up and said: "Yu Peiyu.....Yu Peiyu....Why is this name filled with mystery?"

Jin Yanzi said: "Why...why won't you ask me what happened between young master Yu and Miss Lin before they went to that inn? I do know a bit what happened between them?"

Hong Lianhua smiled sadly: "If one knows too many secrets one will only feel more frustrated. I already know too many secrets, I really do hope I won't know anymore mysteries or riddles."

Jin Yanzi's injuries were quite serious although she was given the best medicine available she was still in not fit to travel yet.

Hong Lianhua advised her to rest for a few more days but being a forthright person she didn't like the idea of just resting for another few days. Hong Lianhua instructed Mei Simang to take her to the Family Li Village.

The disciples of the Beggars Association had already prepared a carriage for them.

Mei Simang rode the carriage and soon they were headed for Family Li Village.

After riding for a day they reached Family Li Village, and it was already night now.

Mei Simang asked: "Miss Jin, where were you supposed to meet with your sister?"

Jin Yanzi replied: "Well, two years ago I passed through this village and I lodged at the family Li inn, so I told her to wait for me there."

Mei Simang smiled: "This is the first time that I came to this village, I don't know where the inn is. Could you tell me what street it is located?"

Jin Yanzi said: "There is only one main street in this little village, and the inn is right in that street."

Suddenly they heard loud strange noises coming towards them.

It was very difficult to tell what that noise was, it sounded like wild animals roaring but they could hear drums, cymballs too.

Mei Simang said: "Miss Jin, hide in the carriage. No matter what don't come out and try to keep quiet."

They quickly got off the road and soon some very suspicious characters passed by. Judging from their postures they were martial artists too.

One of those characters said: "The old one looks annoying there, shall I kill him?"

The other said: "Our brother is waiting for us; we don't have time for this."

The other scoffed: "The old fool is lucky tonight."

And with that they were gone already, Jin Yanzi now came out the carriage and asked: "Sir, why didn't you do something?"

Mei Simang smiled wryly: "They didn't attack us, did they? We shouldn't be bothered with the likes of them."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Are they troublesome characters in Wulin?"

Mei Simang looked rather surprised at Jin Yanzi: "Haven't you heard of them before?"

Jin Yanzi asked: "Who are they?"

Mei Simang said in a serious tone: "They are the infamous Four Beasts."

Jin Yanzi said: "They belonged to the Four Beasts?"

Mei Simang nodded and said: "It seems that all four of them are assembling further ahead."

Jin Yanzi said: "Although these four rogues are supposed to be sworn brothers, but they always operate alone. What brings them here?"

Mei Simang replied: "They are infamous robbers so they must be here for a big job. But what is here in this little village?"

Jin Yanzi felt uneasy and asked: "Where were they heading for?"

Mei Simang said: "Just straight ahead."

Jin Yanzi said: "They are headed for the family Li inn...."

Mei Simang asked: "Does your sister have any precious jewelry with her?"

Jin Yanzi said: "Yes, and lots of it too." She wanted to get off the carriage and rush over to the inn. Mei Simang stopped her and said: "You're still recovering from your wounds."

Jin Yanzi said: "The Four Beasts are not to be trifled with; my sister cannot fight them by herself. I can't watch her just die at their hands."

Mei Simang said: "But if you go too you will be in danger as well."

Jin Yanzi asked: "What shall we do?"

Mei Simang smiled and said: "With me around they won't succeed." Although he said that he wasn't sure whether he really could stop the Four Beasts.

Jin Yanzi asked: "Do you have a plan?"

Mei Simang said: "We have to be careful because the four of them are very cautious."

Mei Simang and Jin Yanzi reached the family Li inn, Mei Simang smiled: "Miss Jin, I'm 68 years old if you don't mind that I'm a smelly old beggar please climb up my back. We will observe them from the roof first."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "There is nothing else we could do right now, is there?"

Mei Simang climbed up the roof and he found a spot where they could oversee the entire room.

Jin Yanzi was very worried and thought: Why is she still sleeping? She should be more alert.

The four rogues had drawn their sabres and were standing outside of Silver Blossom's room and readied themselves.

Suddenly a light burnt in the room and sweet laughter was coming from the room.

The door opened and a beautiful young woman stood there smiling at the Four Beasts. She wore a thin dress revealing her wonderful figure and she had a very sweet innocent but sexy look on her face.

The Four Beasts were stunned and just gazed at her, even the old Mei Simang thought: My goodness! This is the sister of Jin Yanzi?!?

Silver Blossom laughed: "Good evening! What can I do for you?"

The four robbers stuttered: "I.....we....I.....ehhh..."

Saliva was practically drooling from their chins.

Silver Blossom said: "Please come in, don't just stand there in the cold. Do you like a cup of tea?"

The Four Beasts were too captivated by her charm and beauty. The four of them are accustomed to stealing, killing and raping. But somehow they didn't know what to do when they saw this young girl this friendly towards them.

One of the men composed himself and loudly said: "We are lucky that such a beautiful Miss is inviting us for tea. I, the

Black Panther, Qin Biao will drink the first cup.”

A tall man in a black robe entered the room, his face was full of scares and he looked quite gruesome.

Silver Blossom greeted him: “I’m the one who is lucky. It is seldom that I can entertain such a noble hero like you.”

Qin Biao laughed loudly, another man spoke: “Damn it! I will drink a cup too.”

The remaining three men entered too. The first one was big and fat, the second one was very skinny and was missing half an ear.

The third one looked rather normal but somehow his movements were very fallacious. Giving people an uncomfortable feeling.

Jin Yanzi was disgusted by these men and felt that none of them looked human.

But still Silver Blossom remained smiling and gave each and everyone a sweet smile.

The fat man began to laugh: “What a sweet lass! I, the Red Tiger Zhao Gang, have roamed the world many years. But never have I seen a girl like you. I want to devour you right now.”

The third man said: “Miss, please forgive him. He doesn’t know any manners, but he is quite nice.”

After he spoke his body sort of coiled up.

Zhao Gang said: “Although I don’t have a nice face like you, I’m much more of a man than the White Snake Lord.”

All of four of them weren’t suspicious of Silver Blossom and talked and laughed loudly. Only the second man was still silent he didn’t look at Silver Blossom. But when he walked by her he pinched her on the buttocks. Silver Blossom pouted in his ear: “I thought you were a gentleman.”

The man coldly replied: “I’m no man, I am a wolf.”

Silver Blossom smiled: "You're a wolf?"

The man said: "Yes, I am Greywolf."

Zhao Gang was inspecting the bed and said: "She sure smells nice. I sure want to put her on the bed and...hmmmmm"

Greywolf scoffed: "Don't forget we are here on business."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Do all of you rather drink wine?" She poured four cups of wine. The White Snake Lord smiled: "You have very pretty hands, but I don't know if you have used your pretty hands to put poison in our cups."

Zhao Gang jumped up and loudly said: "Even so I will drink the first cup."

With that he grabbed a cup and drank the wine, Qin Biao who looked at Zhao Gang for a minute and saw he wasn't poisoned also drank. He said: "This Miss is a smart girl, she wouldn't dare to poison us."

Mei Simang asked Jin Yanzi: "Do you think she put poison in the wine?"

Jin Yanzi said: "No, I don't think so. But she should have."

Mei Simang smiled: "Miss Jin, you're wrong. Putting poison in the wine is too obvious and easy detectable. Your sister won't use such a silly plan."

Jin Yanzi sighed: "What is she planning?" Mei Simang said: "Your sister has thought it out how to deal with them. Her plan is ten times better than Miss Jin's plan and also ten times better than my plan. I don't think we shall have to intervene tonight."

Silver Blossom asked the White Snake Lord: "Won't you drink the wine?"

The White Snake Lord smiled: "I like to have something with my wine."

Silver Blossom asked: "What do you want with your wine?"

The White Snake Lord said: "I think you know, also you must know our intentions now."

Silver Blossom said: "But those things aren't tasty with wine."

The White Snake Lord said: "But when I look at those things I can drink three cups of wine."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Very well!" She went over to the corner of the bed and took out a big parcel.

She opened and the four beasts were staring at those treasures before them.

Zhao Gang said: "I have never seen such a treasure before in my life. After this I can rest for a very long time."

The White Snake Lord smiled: "Just a minute! We should ask the permission of this young Miss here first."

Zhao Gang yelled: "What? Asking permission?!? I do as I please here."

The White Snake Lord laughed: "Asking doesn't hurt."

Zhao Gang asked Silver Blossom: "Sweetheart, do you want to give us this treasure or not? Stupid me! Why do I use the word not, like she has a choice....hahahahaha"

Silver Blossom said: "I already prepared this for you. You can take it away. And I want to present another treasure to you."

Zhao Gang immediately asked: "What is that treasure? Show us!"

Silver Blossom said in a very seductive manner: "To me that is the most precious thing I have. Care to guess?"

Zhao Gang shook his head and said: "I don't know."

Silver Blossom said: "Perhaps a glance is enough." With that she removed her dress and stood naked in front of these four men.

Their eyes were all focussed on her beautiful body and it seemed like their eyes were glowing with lust.

Zhao Gang swallowed his saliva and said: "The best treasure I have seen. If anyone dares to say that this isn't a treasure I will poke out his eyes."

The White Snake Lord asked with surprise: "Are you really willing to give yourself to us?"

Silver Blossom said in a sweet voice: "Every woman has to get married some time, the only thing a woman wants is a true man."

She gently caressed her own body and said: "Look I am no longer a little girl."

Zhao Gang said: "Whoever dares to say that you're a young girl I will punch him back to his mother's womb."

Qin Biao sternly said: "What are your motives? A beautiful woman like you can easily find a dozen handsome men. What do you want to gain from us?"

Silver Blossom said in a very sincere tone: "Although none of you are handsome but all of you are true noble heroes. Only foolish girls are hoping for a charming handsome prince. But I love true men."

Zhao Gang stood up and said: "Well said! Those girly boys don't know the first thing about handling women. I can promise you that I will give you more pleasure than any of those girly boys can ever give you!"

Suddenly Silver Blossom sighed: "There is only one problem, there is only one of me."

Zhao Gang roared: "I don't have a woman yet, you're mine!"

Silver Blossom lowered her head and said: "Mr. Zhao is indeed a good choice. If I can have a husband like you I won't have any regrets, but....."

She then gave Qin Biao a sad look.

Qin Biao didn't let her finish and said: "Old Zhao, you're only the second brother. I can let you have all the other

treasures but this treasure belongs to me. Because I'm the eldest and the leading brother of all of you."

Zhao Gang sneered: "You're the leader because I let you."

Qin Biao angrily said: "What! Do you question my authority?"

Zhao Gang said: "What if I am?"

Silver Blossom said: "Please don't fight over me. I feel very bad if anything happens to any of you."

The White Snake Lord said: "Miss is right. The best way to solve this problem is to let her pick her own husband."

The White Snake Lord thought he was going to get picked because he was the most handsome one in the group.

But in fact all the other three thought they were going to get chosen by this treasure.

Because if she didn't like me, why would she give me those meaningful looks.

So the other three beasts called out: "That's a good idea!"

Zhao Gang laughed: "Little Treasure! You're Diao Chan(*) and I am Lu Bu (*), we're made for each other."

{*Note: A Famous love couple during the Three Kingdoms Period}

Silver Blossom bit her lip and glanced at the four men. Qin Biao said: "Tell us who you love, don't be afraid."

Zhao Gang said: "Pick me and I will make sure none of them will dare to lay a hand on you."

All four of them were very confident that she fell in love with him. If a woman has such a powerful effect on men, this woman is not to be trifled with.

Mei Simang was flabbergasted, he never thought the sister of Jin Yanzi would be such a formidable young woman.

He smiled wryly and thought: It is a good thing that I am 68 years old. If not I will certainly jump down and.....

Chapter 13 : Ulterior Motives

These are all exemplary families but the most respected of these families should be the Tang Clan in Sichuan province. Their usage and development of poisonous secretive weaponry are unmatched in the realm.

The Tang Mansion looks very impressive, the descendants of the Tang Clan have preserved the family house very good. Even ordered to build extra wings for their ever growing number of disciples and relatives.

Silver Blossom looked at the four men for some time and sighed: "All of you are real heroes I don't know how to choose. The only thing I can come up with is...."

All four of them asked: "What is it?"

Silver Blossom said: "I am only a weak female I just hope my husband can protect me. So like many other women I just hope my husband has superior martial arts."

At this point Greywolf's face changed and wanted to speak. Before he could do so, Silver Blossom continued: "However if the four of you would fight amongst each other I will be sad too. I don't want you to fight or get injured over me."

Greywolf's face returned to normal. Zhao Gang asked: "I don't understand. How will you be able to see which one of us is stronger?"

Silver Blossom said: "If all of you would display your best skill I will be able to see who of you has the best martial arts. And in this way you won't have to fight over me."

Zhao Gang laughed: "A good idea! A good idea!"

Jin Yanzi softly asked Mei Simang: "What is she planning?"

Mei Simang said: "Your sister is hoping the four of them will kill themselves in a fight."

Jin Yanzi said: "If so why doesn't she come up with a plan that will make them fight amongst themselves?"

Mei Simang said: "She is a clever girl. That Greywolf is a bit suspicious already and if she insisted the four of them should fight he will surely see through her trickery."

Jin Yanzi frowned: "But they're not going to fight now."

Mei Simang smiled: "Your sister has seen through that although they are sworn brothers, but they do not respect or acknowledge each other. Each one of them feels that his martial arts is superior to the other, so in the end they will bound to fight each other till the death. But this way they won't suspect your sister has anything to do with it."

Jin Yanzi sighed and remained silent.

On the other hand Zhao Gang walked up to a pile of bricks and generated his energy to his right palm and smashed a brick into pieces.

Silver Blossom smiled: "Mr. Zhao has very good martial arts, I never thought anyone's palm could be that strong and powerful."

Zhao Gang laughed: "I'm certain that few people have this ability in Wulin."

Silver Blossom nodded in agreement, but glanced at Qin Biao.

Qin Biao sneered: "This type of martial arts is very suitable to chop wood. In a real battle such skills are useless."

Zhao Gang angrily shouted: "In other words you think you're better than I."

Qin Biao didn't answer but just coldly laughed, he walked to another pile of bricks and sat on it.

Zhao Gang scoffed: "What are you training here? The Buttocks Skill?"

Qin Biao coldly said: "Your brains don't work but I do hope your eyes are alright."

Suddenly Zhao Gang saw that Qin Biao was slowly descending, the bricks were drilled into the ground. Qin Biao used his internal strenght to drill the bricks into the floor."

Silver Blossom laughed and applauded: "Excellent skill! Mr. Qin's martial arts are truly amazing, don't you agree?"

The White Snake Lord nodded and said: "I haven't seen brother Qin only for a few months. It is hard to believe that you mastered such level in such a short time."

Qin Biao laughed: "If I didn't have such martial arts, how could lead you bunch of.....ahhhhhhh"

His laughter stopped and he turned pale, somehow Greywolf sneaked up on him and stabbed a dagger into his back.

Qin Biao said angrilly: "Old Wolf.....you're..you're too vicious....!"

Greywolf coldly said: "I just want to tell you that although old Zhao's martial arts are only good for chopping wood. But your skills are useless too. Do you really expect your enemies will let you sit on them?"

He turned to Silver Blossom and said: "In my opinion the only good martial arts is the one that kills."

Qin Biao wanted to grab Greywolf's neck, but Greywolf quickly leapt away and pulled out the dagger. Blood gushed out of Qin Biao's wound and he fell to the ground.

Zhao Gang angrilly said: "Old Qin may be a stupid moron but we're still brothers. How could you?"

Greywolf coldly said: "With him dead you're the leading brother."

Zhao Gang grunted and stayed quiet.

The White Snake Lord said: "Old Wolf is right, the only good martial arts is the type that is lethal. But my killing skills aren't as good as old Wolf."

He had already positioned himself behind Zhao Gang's back for some time now and after he finished his sentence he

launched an attack at Zhao Gang.

Zhao Gang may look dumb but he isn't as stupid as he looks. When he knew that the White Snake Lord attacked him he didn't back away in fact he counter-attacked.

Unfortunately he was a bit too fat, and couldn't avoid the sword stance to his body. The short sword stabbed through his shoulder but he had already grabbed the neck of the White Snake Lord.

He asked with a mean laugh: "Do you think you can escape?"

The White Snake Lord begged: "Second brother Zhao, please spare me!"

Zhao Gang said: "In my heart I have forgiven you, but my hands are not listening to my heart."

With one movement he snapped the neck of the White Snake Lord. Greywolf, who was also a bit shocked to see Zhao Gang killing the White Snake Lord, said: "Impressive, old Zhao!"

Zhao Gang pulled out the short sword and looked at Greywolf: "And then there were only two."

Silver Blossom who arranged the entire scenario was hiding and watching from a corner.

Greywolf walked up to the table and sat down, he said: "Old Zhao, sit down first. Let us talk this over." He poured two cups of tea.

Zhao Gang replied: "Alright! I'm interested what you have to say."

Greywolf said: "Some things in life you can share with others. For instance I would share a bottle of good wine with you anytime. And I believe you would do the same thing, right?"

Zhao Gang said: "So what if I would? Get one with your shit!"

Silver Blossom frowned, she knew where Greywolf was getting at.

Greywolf said: "It is not uncommon to see two women marrying to one man, why won't we share one wife?"

Zhao Gang shouted: "I can share a lot of things, but nobody touches my woman!"

Greywolf coldly said: "The two of us have a lot of enemies, you can kill me. But if so you will have to face your enemies alone. Furthermore if the two of us started fighting no one would know the outcome."

Zhao Gang was silent for some time, he was thinking over Greywolf's words.

After pondering for some time he laughed: "Right, half a wife is better than having no wife. By the looks of it I may not handle this little tart alone."

He raised the cup of tea and said: "My good brother, I will listen you to your suggestion."

Silverblossom walked up and smiled: "It is a very good idea! Drink this cup of tea and you will even like the idea more and more."

Zhao Gang looked at the cup and thought for a minute and put it down. He is not the brightest man in Wulin but he has roamed the realm long enough to have gained some experience. He didn't learn any good habits but he mastered plenty of nasty habits to survive.

He looked at Greywolf and said: "Have you done something with this tea?"

Greywolf yelled: "Don't be a fool! We're brothers for many years don't let outsiders drive a wedge between us."

Silver Blossom said: "Why won't you drink the tea?"

She casually put her finger in the cup for an instant and put it in front of Greywolf.

She said: "I say there is poison in this tea and if you don't want to drink it. I understand."

Zhao Gang yelled: "Drink the tea! If you don't I will snap your neck!"

Greywolf loudly said: "There wasn't any poison in the tea, but after you put your finger in it. There is poison now."

Silver Blossom said: "You're accusing me?"

Greywolf said: "Yes you, you little crumpet!"

He leapt up and wanted to hit Silver Blossom, she quickly hid behind Zhao Gang.

Zhao Gang angrily said: "You're the one who put poison in the tea! Do you think I'm a dumb pig!"

Greywolf aimed his two fists at Zhao Gang's chest, Zhao Gang didn't avoid those blows. Greywolf's fists struck him on the chest but Greywolf felt like he was hitting a bag of sand. He quickly wanted to draw his sabre but it was too late. Zhao Gang struck hard on the chest too and he fell down, to finish him off Zhao Gang raised his fist and struck him on the head. Killing him instantly.

Silver Blossom was clapping her hands. Zhao Gang spat on Greywolf's body.

Silver Blossom said: "Mr. Zhao's body is truly amazing! But are you alright? Are you in pain?"

Zhao Gang patted himself on the chest and said: "Those dirty paws of him won't harm me."

Silver Blossom said: "But your shoulder is still bleeding."

She used her finger to gently touch the wound on his shoulder and asked: "Does it hurt?"

Zhao Gang laughed: "Not at all!"

He wanted to embrace her, but she quickly ran away and smiled: "Catch me if you can? If you can catch me I will give you a surprise."

She was as swift as a fox, Zhao Gang couldn't catch her and said: "Little darling! Let me give you a kiss!"

Silver Blossom stopped running and sighed: "You really are a dumb pig."

Zhao Gang said: "What are you saying?"

Silver Blossom said: "I just put poison on your wound enough to kill ten pigs. But if you didn't run around to catch me you could have lived another two hours."

Zhao Gang roared and collapsed on the ground. Silver Blossom sighed: "Why won't anyone listen to my good advice?"

She opened the door and the henchmen of the Four Beasts were still outside waiting. These men were trained not to move without permission from their leaders, although they heard strange noises from the room they didn't dare to check.

Silver Blossom smiled: "Here are four bodies, would you mind carrying them outside?"

Those henchmen all hurried to the door and saw their leaders were dead and are stunned.

Silver Blossom smiled: "I can understand what you are going through. Your leaders died under strange circumstances if you want to avenge them I don't mind."

The men were too shocked and thought why she is still smiling like that. Her clothes are not torn, they were too terrified to even think of avenging their leaders. They knew the deaths of their leaders were related to this strange but beautiful woman. They quickly ran to their horses and fled.

Silver Blossom sighed: "The robbers nowadays are such losers."

Jin Yanzi and Mei Simang were both absolutely stunned about what just happened.

Mei Simang said with an enforced smile: "Your sister is really formidable. In my opinion she is as lethal as Madame Hai Tang, I knew we didn't have to intervene."

Jin Yanzi was still too surprised to talk. Mei Simang said: "Miss Jin, it is safe now you can go down now. I have to report back to master Hong Lian."

Jin Yanzi asked: "Won't you come in for a minute?"

Mei Simang smiled: "Although I am old, I am still a man. Furthermore I rather not meet your sister....."

With that he was off.

Jin Yanzi sighed; Silver Blossom heard someone and said: "I didn't expect to have anymore visitors. But feel free to come in."

Jin Yanzi came down and Silver Blossom was shocked to see her. Before she could say anything Jin Yanzi slapped her twice on her face, very hard.

She stuttered: "Sis, you....you...."

Jin Yanzi was still angry and thought those two slaps were not hard enough, she scoffed: "I'm not fit to be your sister. Human life means nothing to you, who know I may be next on your list."

Silver Blossom touched her face and started to cry.

Jin Yanzi angrily reproached: "Spare me your tears! You should be happy that you have such lethal skills."

Silver Blossom sobbed: "I didn't want to do this, but they gave me no choice. If I didn't trick them they would have....."

She knelt down and sobbed: "You can hit me, scold me but don't treat me like a stranger. If you don't want me as your sister anymore I will die in front of you to proof my intentions."

Jin Yanzi, who was not so angry anymore after scolding and slapping her, said: "But still you shouldn't have to be this

ruthless.”

Silver Blossom continued: “I know I shouldn’t. But....but when I was young I was bullied and abused lots and lots of times.....I was afraid.....that’s why....I....I.....was that ruthless.”

She continued: “If sis came back earlier I didn’t have to use these disgusting lowly tricks.”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “You’re right. I am also to blame I was outside the entire time.”

She helped Silver Blossom up and consoled and started to weep too. Silver Blossom on the other hand almost exploded with laughter. She thought that Jin Yanzi must be one of the most gullible women on this world.

The world of martial arts is a dangerous place but also a very fair place. If you have the skills you can become very famous. And if you become famous your life will brighten up like a comet soaring through the sky. But a comet comes and passes very quickly just a lifetime.

Within 300 years the realm of martial arts has produced numerous heroes. Some were able of them were able to keep up their fame and some couldn’t. There are some of them whose children or grandchildren managed to preserve the fame of the heroic ancestor.

Besides Shaolin, Wudang, E Mei and other schools with a glorious history there are some famous Wulin families who share the shame fame and glamour as those prestigious Wulin Schools.

The fame and glory of these families were established by their ancestors. That glory and fame came with a lot tears, sweat and BLOOD. But in exchange for their efforts they received the respect of their Wulin peers.

Futhermore the skills of these families are not to be underestimated.

Some examples of these families should be the famous Zhang family in Beijing, their ancestor the physician Zhang Jianzhai was an excellent physician and martial artist. His descendants are still practicing medicine.

Or the Thunderbolt Clan that became famous because of their expertise in gunpowder and making secretive weaponry using gunpowder.

The Nangong family in the southern provinces are well-known for their marvellous palm techniques.

And the disciples of the Celestial Water Hall are known for their impressive swimming abilities. Who can forget the Peng Family in Henan Province? Their Five Tigers and Door Slashing Sabre is a recognized powerful sabre style.

These are all exemplary families but the most respected of these families should be the Tang Clan in Sichuan province. Their usage and development of poisonous secretive weaponry are unmatched in the realm.

The Tang Mansion looks very impressive, the descendants of the Tang Clan have preserved the family house very good. Even ordered to build extra wings for their ever growing number of disciples and relatives.

The Tang disciples are not only good martial artists but also very good entrepreneurs. Earning profits to help establish and preserving the fame of the Tang Clan has been a family tradition.

When Silver Blossom entered the property of the Tang Clan she saw that the Tangs have managed to turn their mansion into a small city. They had shops, restaurants, blacksmiths, etc. She was very much impressed and surprised to see this.

After a long time she softly asked Jin Yanzi: "This is the Tang Mansion?"

Jin Yanzi smiled: "You wouldn't believe it, would you?"

Although they were being watched by the people here but none came by to question them. Silver Blossom said: "This is

strange. It is said that the TangMansion is as heavily guarded as the Shaolin Monastery, or the PurpleHeavenPalace on MountWudang. But it seems that is highly exaggerated.”

Jin Yanzi smiled: “If you weren’t travelling with me you wouldn’t even have made it to the front door. It is because the people here know me and as you’re travelling with me they didn’t come to question us.”

Silver Blossom asked: “The Keeper of the mansion...”

Jin Yanzi said: “Old Mr. Tang lives way in the back with his sons and daughters. Don’t think you can reach the inner quarters easily. You have pass through numerous guards to even get to the doors of the main wing.”

Silver Blossom said softly to herself: “It is not strange that he is so cowardly. He has been well protected his entire life.”

Jin Yanzi frowned: “How do you know that old Mr. Tang is cowardly”

Silver Blossom knew she said too much and smiled: “It is just a rumour I heard some time ago.”

Jin Yanzi wanted to inform a bit more about this rumour when suddenly a few young women came to greet them.

A woman in a white dress smiled to Jin Yanzi and said: “Third lass, it’s about time you came and paid us a visit.”

After the introduction this young woman was the daughter of Tang Wushuang, Tang Qi, and also the semi-leader of the Tang Clan. Tang Wushuang has more or less retired from Wulin and left most of the duties to this daughter.

Silver Blossom softly asked Jin Yanzi afterwards: “This second sister Tang is smart, capable and quite pretty. I wonder why she isn’t married yet.”

Jin Yanzi sighed: “She has been engaged three times but before the actual wedding all her three fiancées died. Some people were saying she brings bad luck and so. These

rumours reached her ears too and she vowed in front her ancestral graves that she will never get married."

Tang Qi praised Silver Blossom and congratulated Jin Yanzi for finding such a good sister.

Next to Tang Qi was another young woman she was the eldest daughter-in-law of Tang Wushuang, Li Peiling.

Her husband Tang Yu was one of the more talented second generation Tang disciples.

The third girl was the youngest daughter of Tang Wushuang, Tang Lin. She looked very elegant and refined, but she looked troubled and sad at the moment.

Li Peiling and Tang Qi prepared a banquet for Jin Yanzi and Silver Blossom.

Tang Qi said: "Our father is resting you don't have pay your respects to him yet. Let us go to the room of my eldest brother and drink to our contend."

Li Peiling smiled: "My heaven. You really are something aren't you? You even know that your brother and I have saved up two bottles of precious wine."

Tang Qi laughed: "Let us drink those bottles with our esteemed guests, when eldest brother comes home he will finish those bottles alone."

Silver Blossom tried her best to get along with these three women which was working. Her goal was to find Tang Yue, the second son of Tang Wushuang and lover of Golden Blossom.

Silver Blossom took out a few beautiful objects from her treasure and gave it to the three women as presents.

Later on all of them were drinking and laughing. Suddenly Tang Qi asked: "Well third lass , how old are you?"

Jin Yanzi joked: "Why do you ask? Do you want to arrange a meeting for me with someone you know? If you were a man I would marry you."

Tang Qi drank a cup empty and said: "I know you're about 20 odd years old. You should look for a good husband?"

Jin Yanzi blushed and said: "You should worry about yourself."

Tang Qi said: "I'm not getting married in my life, when you have reached my age you will learn that being single is quite lonely."

After saying this she drank another cup of wine.

Jin Yanzi felt a bit sad for her but said: "Are we opening up today?"

Tang Qi sighed: "Do you really think I wanted to be an old spinster? But who wants to take me as his wife?"

She poured another cup and drank.

Li Peiling smiled: "But honestly, third lass are you in love with someone? Perhaps the young master of the divine sabre?"

Jin Yanzi loudly said: "Don't mention him!"

Li Peiling asked: "You must like someone else, right?"

Jin Yanzi blushed and smiled: "No, I am not."

Tang Qi smiled too: "I know you are. Tell us who is it! Be honest now!" She stood up and wanted to tickle Jin Yanzi.

Jin Yanzi hid behind Tang Lin and smiled: "Fourth sister isn't that young anymore, why won't you ask her whether she is in love with someone."

Tang Lin stood up and said: "I didn't interfere with your matters. You should stay out of mine."

She stood up and left.

Jin Yanzi was surprised and asked: "Why is she angry?"

Tang Qi said: "I don't know either. She is been acting strange lately."

Li Peiling said: "Girls at their age are always a bit quick-tempered. I will go and see her."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Sister Li, I will go."

Li Peiling nodded and said: "Alright, she does seem to like you. But hurry back I still have a few dishes you have to taste."

Silver Blossom followed Tang Lin and saw her standing under a tree looking very sad.

Silver Blossom sighed: "Life can sometimes be very sad, won't you agree?"

Tang Lin who was feeling lonely and sad, she looked at Silver Blossom and said sadly: "How do you know what loneliness is? You get to travel around the realm, you meet people get to see things."

Silver Blossom sighed: "You're still young. Some people can smile and talk the entire day but in their hearts they pine away for love. Everyone deals with loneliness in a different way."

Tang Lin thought over those words and nodded and said softly: "You're right. But how do you know if the person you're thinking of is also thinking of you."

Silver Blossom said: "I don't know, in fact no one knows. That is the difficult and painful part about life and love."

Tang Lin nodded and agreed.

Silver Blossom said: "A very long time ago I fell in love with a young man called, Zou Yulang. I only met him once but I kept thinking of him, but I'm afraid he doesn't even remember my name."

This is absolutely rubbish, but in order to find out where Tang Yue is she trying to trick this lovesick young girl.

Tang Lin suddenly asked: "Have you been to many places?"

Silver Blossom nodded. Tang Lin continued: "Have you met and seen a lot of people in your journeys?"

Silver Blossom smiled wryly: "Too many to mention."

Tang Lin lowered her head and was hesitating whether she should ask this question. After some time she raised her head and looked at Silver Blossom and asked: "Do you know a young man called.....Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu again Yu Peiyu, Silver Blossom's heart skipped a beat. But she remained calm and asked: "When did you meet this Yu Peiyu? You never leave the TangMansion."

Tang Lin softly said: "A few days he came by."

Silver Blossom was surprised and said: "He came by."

Tang Lin bit her lip and said: "He came by to pay a visit to my father, that day my sister and sister-in-law weren't home. Only I was at home after talking to my father for some time, my father had to leave. My father instructed me to him company, so I chatted with him....."

She was blushing but her eyes glittered, Silver Blossom listened carefully.

Tang Lin continued: "Normally I don't like talking to strangers but in front of him I felt very at ease. His every word and movement were very considerate and gentle. His voice was filled with understanding and compassion. He was heavily injured at that time but he tried his best to hide it, he didn't want me to know that he was wounded. He was afraid that I would be worried about him, he always thinks of the other people first."

Her voice was sounded soft and like she was describing a dream.

Silver Blossom asked: "What happened afterwards?"

Tang Lin said: "Afterwards my father came back so I had to take my leave, I...I ..thought I would see him the following day. But...but...he left during the night and father didn't tell me where he had gone to. He told my father that he was very grateful that I took the time to accompany him. I....I....am afraid I will never see him again...."

She started crying.

Silver Blossom said: "You just met him once, does he really mean that much to you?"

Tang Lin said: "But you only met Zou Yulang once too."

Silver Blossom remembered her lie and said: "If you could never see him anymore."

Tang Lin said: "If that's the case there is nothing I can do, but....but I think I will never be happy again."

Silver Blossom looked at her and said: "But if someone could let you see him again."

Tang Lin grabbed her hand and said: "If that person could help me I will....I will...do anything to repay that person. I've never been so passionate about anything in my life, but now I'm pining away."

Silver Blossom sighed: "Young love, young love."

Tang Lin trembled and said with a shaky voice: "You can help me?"

Silver Blossom didn't answer her question and said: "I always wanted to see something, could you help me?"

Tang Lin said quickly: "What is it?"

Silver Blossom said: "I've always wanted to see the famous Tang secretive weaponry fabrication. It is been said that it is one of the most mysterious places in the realm. It sounds like a lot of fun."

Tang Lin said: "That place isn't much fun."

Silver Blossom sighed: "Well, since you can't help me I will have to get back inside and eat my dumplings."

Tang Lin stopped her and said: "If I can help you, you....."

Silver Blossom smiled: "I will help you too."

Tang Lin thought for a moment and said: "Alright! I will take you there but I cannot guarantee we will be able to succeed. You have to promise me not to touch anything in there."

Silver Blossom happily said: "Just a look will be fine I won't touch a thing."

Tang Lin said: "Let us go now."

Silver Blossom said: "Let us go inside and eat our dumplings. We don't want them to get suspicious. During midnight we will meet each other here again."

Tang Lin nodded and had tears in her eyes and thought: Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu I'm doing this because of you. Will you ever know that?

During midnight both of them met again, Tang Lin led the way.

After walking for a short while Tang Lin told Silver Blossom to hide in the bushes first. Silver Blossom saw a cave being guarded by a few Tang disciples. Silver Blossom had heard that the secretive weapons of the Tang Clan were fabricated with special mineral water found in one of the caves at their land. But whether this story is true no one knows for sure.

Silver Blossom asked: "Why don't we go in now."

Tang Lin said: "My fourth martial arts brother Tang Shoufang is guarding the cave now. He is very strict he won't let anyone pass."

Silver Blossom coldly said: "Let us go back now."

Tang Lin quickly added: "But in a moment his watch will be over and either my eldest or my seventh martial arts brothers will take over. They are much easier to persuade."

Silver Blossom smiled.

After some time Tang Lin asked: "Do you know young master Yu too?"

Silver Blossom indifferently nodded.

Tang Lin bit her lip and said: "How did you meet each other?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "Don't worry we're just normal friends. My heart belongs to someone else."

Tang Lin blushed but felt secured now in her heart.

Silver Blossom said: "I heard that he was injured in his face recently. Is that true?"

Tang Lin sighed: "That's true. There is still a scar on his face. He told me that the most vicious and mean woman in the world did that."

Silver Blossom was fuming but smiled: "It must be a mean woman or else she wouldn't have injured him."

Tang Lin smiled sweetly: "If that woman thinks that with that she has ruined his looks, she is wrong."

Silver Blossom asked: "How come?"

Tang Lin said: "That scar on his face brings out his manliness. Before he had a scar on his face I think he might have looked a bit too feminine. He now has more charisma in my opinion."

Silver Blossom was furious but said: "The apple of your eye always appears beautiful to you."

Suddenly another group of Tang disciples came, it was time to switch guards.

The man in front of the new group was a short and fat man.

Tang Lin's face cleared up and said: "We're in luck, my seventh martial arts brother, Tang Shouqing is guarding the cave now."

Silver Blossom asked: "That little fat man is your seventh martial arts brother?"

Tang Lin said: "My seventh brother is a very friendly man, his martial arts has reached a very high level. His nickname is the Thousand Armed Arhat. Next to my brother and my eldest martial arts brother he is the most famous expert of our Tang Clan."

Silver Blossom smiled: "If you didn't tell me, I thought he looked like a proprietor of a restaurant."

Tang Lin smiled too: "When he isn't on duty he is a proprietor of a restaurant. He is also responsible for receiving guests and when trespassers do come here they have to deal with my seventh brother first."

Tang Shouqing stopped in front of the entrance and took out a metal tablet and showed it to the guards.

In awhile a tall muscular man with a short beard walked out. He looked quite impressive.

Tang Shouqing smiled: "Fourth brother, sorry to have kept you waiting."

Tang Shoufang looked around and said: "Why are there only 29 men here?"

Tang Shouqing said: "Little Hu's wife is in labour so I gave Little Hu permission to go back to his wife."

Tang Shoufang looked very serious and said: "Having children is not an important matter, practically every day someone is having a baby here in Tang manor. When my wife was giving birth to my son I did not neglect my duties and was still on watch."

Tang Shouqing apologized: "My mistake, I will not....."

Tang Shoufang grunted: "Nevermind. Next month he will have to be on duty three extra times. But you're still short of one man."

Tang Shouqing smiled: "Fourth brother nothing has happened here for the last 13 years. What does one extra or one man less matter?"

Tang Shoufang sternly said: "Seventh brother, you cannot say that. Even if nothing has happened to this place for a thousand years we still have to be vigilant. The reason that nothing has happened is that we have been guarding this place very well for the last 10 odd years."

Tang Shouqing lowered his head and said: "I understand."

Tang Shoufang looked at the 30 men in his own group, he pointed at one man and said: "You! Yesterday during dinner you drank a bit of wine during your watch. I will punish you now for that, you will take over for Little Hu tonight."

That man replied respectfully: "Yes."

Tang Shoufang waved his hand and he and his men left, Tang Shouqing and the other 29 men took their places.

After the men had taken their positions Tang Shoufang turned to Tang Shouqing and said: "Come by tomorrow at my place for dinner. Your sister-in-law has bought two pheasants, she knows that you like to eat pheasants too."

Tang Shouqing said: "I will bring the wine."

Tang Shoufang waved his hand and his men followed him, suddenly he turned around and said: "Don't bring too much wine."

Tang Shouqing smiled: "Alright."

Silver Blossom was impressed and a bit scared by the security measures taken by the Tang Clan. Any reckless idiot who would try to steal their secret will surely be killed before reaching this place.

Tang Lin waited till Tang Shoufang was out of sight and said: "Let us try our luck."

She took Silver Blossom by her hand and they walked out, some men called out: "Who goes there."

Tang Lin responded: "It is me, Tang Lin."

The men respectfully said: "It is the fourth Miss."

Tang Lin said: "I have something important to ask my seventh martial arts brother."

She continued to walk to the entrance but the men blocked her way. One of them said: "Please forgive us, but without

permission from the old master no one is allowed to enter the cave.”

Tang Lin said: “At least let my seventh brother come out and see me.”

The man thought for a minute and said: “I will notify Mr. Tang Shouqing.”

Immediately Tang Shouqing came out to greet Tang Lin and smiled: “Well, fourth sister what can I do for you? And I see that you’ve brought an esteemed guest as well.”

Silver Blossom smiled and looked at him.

Tang Lin smiled: “How do you know she is an esteemed guest?”

Tang Shouqing said: “Yesterday I heard that someone drank up the two precious bottles of wine brother Tang Yu had saved. I wanted to drink a cup too but I wasn’t invited.”

Tang Lin smiled: “No wonder sister Qi (Tang Qi) always praises seventh brother for being informative.”

Tang Shouqing smiled: “I will take that as a compliment, now what can I do for you?”

Tang Lin said: “I brought a guest with me, so what are you going to do to welcome her.”

Tang Shouqing smiled wryly: “There is nothing here that is of any interest. She can always drop by me restaurant for a few bowls of the finest shark fin soup.”

Tang Lin pouted: “What is special about shark fin soup.”

She pulled Tang Shouqing’s sleeve and said: “She just wants to have a look, last time when sister Qi brought a guest you allowed her to take the guest for a tour. If you allowed her so you should also allow me to do the same thing. Or else you’re not welcome at my place when I am having a feast.”

Tang Shouqing sighed: “When I heard that you were here I already guessed your motives. Why didn’t you come by when fourth brother was on duty?”

Silver Blossom giggled and said: "I know we couldn't fool him, let's ask sister Qi."

She was talking to Tang Lin but it was loud enough for Tang Shouqing to hear it too.

Tang Shouqing sighed: "You know that I'm afraid of the second Miss, but I'm also afraid of the fourth Miss. She is quite a petty girl."

He moved aside and said: "Be quick with your tour and don't wander off."

The two of them walked to the entrance of the cave, Silver Blossom saw a big heavy metal door. Tang Shouqing pressed a switch and the iron doors opened. Silver Blossom knew that no one can force their way inside unless you know how to operate the switch.

Tang Lin and Silver Blossom entered the cave. It was deep cave and looked quite ancient and spooky.

Silver Blossom said: "He didn't have to warn us, in such a place nobody would wander off."

Tang Lin pouted: "If it wasn't for you I wouldn't enter this eerie place."

Although she said that she felt in her heart very proud that the Tang Clan had preserved this practically sacred place.

Tang Lin led the way, the underground water source was channeled to several apparatuses. Some muscular men looking blacksmiths were operating these apparatuses.

The entire place was organized like an underground factory, you had blacksmiths striking the iron till the required models.

It looked very impressive and majestic, Silver Blossom was very much impressed and began to realise why the Tang Clan had been famous and respected for about 300 years.

Tang Lin asked after an hour or so: "Seen enough?"

Silver Blossom said: "Are you joking? This place is magnificent I haven't seen enough yet."

Tang Lin said: "Everyone who came here for the first time has the same expression like you. No one would have guessed that forging our tiny secretive weapons would require such an enterprise."

Tang Lin thought for a moment and took out a metallic object from her girdle and showed it to Silver Blossom. It resembled a flower.

Tang Lin asked: "Do you recognize this?"

Silver Blossom looked at it carefully and said: "I don't have a clue."

Tang Lin said: "This is one of our most feared secretive weapons, the spiked bludgeon. Our spiked bludgeons differ from the spiked bludgeons from other people because our bludgeons are fabricated in a special way."

Silver Blossom deliberately said: "I don't see anything special."

Tang Lin explained: "The spiked bludgeons of other people are made according to fixed stencil plates. They pour the melted metal into those stencils."

Silver Blossom asked: "How do you make them?"

Tang Lin answered: "Our bludgeons are made from 13 very thin metallic plates, plate for plate are put together till this form. Whenever our bludgeon hits someone the plates will fold open and clutch into the flesh. And when that person wants to pull out the bludgeon he will also pull out a part of his own flesh."

Silver Blossom exclaimed: "How very lethal! And the pain!"

Tang Lin said: "The pain isn't the main concern. Even if the person pulled out the bludgeon they are beyond rescue."

Silver Blossom asked: "Why do you say that?"

Tang Lin explained: "Every plate has been dipped with a different type of poison, when the 13 kinds of poison make contact with the blood then it is too late."

Silver Blossom got goosebumps when she heard this and said: "That explains why everyone fears the Tang Clan secretive weapons."

Tang Lin added: "There are seven most lethal secretive weapons in our family, the spiked bludgeon is a rather simple weapon compared to those seven. There are some of our weapons which are constructed from 70 to 80 thin metallic plates. For example the construction of the quiver to hold The Ninth Heaven And Tenth Netherworld Celestial Needles is one of the best kept secrets in Wulin."

Silver Blossom added: "That's why you have different people working on different parts of your secretive weapons. You don't want the workmen to learn the secret of making the Tang secretive weapons."

Tang Lin said: "Exactly, although we only have really loyal and trustworthy people working here but still our ancestors thought of a way to make sure that the workmen will never learn the secret. For example these two men are responsible for modelling those metallic plates. They will never know how the metallic plates become a spiked bludgeon."

She pointed at two blacksmiths striking iron.

Silver Blossom praised: "No wonder the Tang Clan has become and stayed the number one experts in secretive weaponry."

Tang Lin said: "This way these men can go home after their shifts and live their lives. We're not afraid that people will threaten them to reveal our secret. Because they don't know it."

Silver Blossom pointed to a stone house and said: "Who is in there?"

Tang Lin said: "The people in there are responsible for putting the plates together."

Silver Blossom asked: "Won't they reveal your secret?"

Tang Lin said: "The workmen in there are usually old men who have retired and do not have any family anymore. Also they requested for this job themselves and will never leave this place."

Silver Blossom sighed: "That's why they are so diligent. They have given up their lives for the fabrication of secretive weapons."

At this point Tang Shouqing came and walked up to them.

Tang Lin suddenly said: "Will the two of you wait for me a minute, I am going to see someone. I'll be right back."

Tang Shouqing frowned and said: "Fourth sister, don't forget....."

Before he could finish Tang Lin was already out of sight.

Chapter 14 : Up To No Good

Silver Blossom said in a trembling voice: "She...she...my sister... You shouldn't be thinking of her now, because....because....."

Tang Yue quickly asked: "What has happened?"

Silver Blossom said loudly: "She has found another man."

Tang Yue was speechless.

Silver Blossom was seemingly chit-chatting with Tang Shouqing but she secretly watched Tang Lin enter one of the stone houses. Although the door was closed very quickly, Silver Blossom could see that the man Tang Lin was talking to was not an old man. She couldn't see his face but she did immediately thought: It must be Tang Yue, Tang Wushuang must have hidden his son here.

She was extremely happy about this but didn't forget Tang Shouqing.

Tang Shouqing said: "Would you and Miss Jin join me for lunch tomorrow at my restaurant."

Silver Blossom blushed: "If sister Jin is going I will go too."

She walked to a underwater stream and said: "Could I wash my hands here?"

Tang Shouqing said: "Of course you can."

Silver Blossom put her hands in the water and washed them, Tang Shouqing was captivated by her elegant and beautiful hands.

Tang Lin came back and was quite annoyed, she said: "He's becoming very strange, he wouldn't even look at me."

Tang Shouqing said: "He's feeling a bit upset lately. Don't mind him."

Silver Blossom was certain that man was Tang Yue, she secretly dropped her purple silk handkerchief into the water.

She got up and said: "Fourth sister, I have seen enough."

Tang Shouqing said: "Fourth sister...."

Tang Lin interrupted: "Seventh brother, don't worry. We haven't given you any problems."

Tang Shouqing said: "Next time....."

Suddenly Tang Shouqing saw that the stream up ahead was emitting a purple smoke. The smoke turned into a thick fog. The fog was becoming very thick in short time and you couldn't even see who was standing next to you anymore.

Tang Shouqing called out loudly: "Everyone stay at your current position and be extra vigilant!"

Tang Lin asked: "What should I do?"

Tang Shouqing said: "Stay here and take care of your friend."

Tang Shouqing took out a flint and made a small fire. He dashed into the fog and went to his position.

Tang Lin wanted to take Silver Blossom's hand but she was gone.

She called out: "Sister Hua, Hua Yingfeng, where are you?"

However Silver Blossom will never respond to her cries.

Silver Blossom already calculated the position of the stone house and when the fog was thick enough she immediately ran to it.

She quietly asked: "Tang Yue, young master Tang are you here?"

A voice asked: "Who is looking for me?"

Silver Blossom took him by his hand and said: "Don't you recognize my voice?"

Tang Yue said: "Silver Blossom?"

Silver Blossom laughed: "Yes, my sister is thinking of you. I came here to take you to see her."

Tang Yue said: "But my father...."

He was still hesitating but was already pulled out.

Silver Blossom said: "Don't you want to see my sister?"

Silver Blossom waved her hand and a silver object flew out and emitted a metallic glow. She could now distinct clearly where the exit was.

She also noticed that Tang Yue wasn't really to keen on leaving this place.

They could hear Tang Shouqing sternly giving orders: "Watch the exit don't let anyone come or go out!"

Silver Blossom said rather annoyed: "Tang Yue, don't make me use force on you."

Tang Yue now saw no choice but to follow her.

When they reached the exit, some of the men used their swords and sabres to stop two figures. Silver Blossom waved her hand and those men screamed and fell to the ground.

Both of them came out the cave, outside everything was still normal. The guards outside were unaware of the chaos in the cave, suddenly a tall man saw Silver Blossom and pulled his sabre. Silver Blossom killed him with one stroke.

Now a gong was sounded and the guards outside were also alarmed. For the past two days, Silver Blossom had already planned an escape route. She pulled Tang Yue by the hand and fled to the south.

Tang Yue protested: "But Tang Mansion is heavily guarded."

Silver Blossom giggled: "Everyone thinks the Tang Mansion is as safe as the imperial palace. But to us Tang Mansion is no different from an ordinary inn. We go and leave as we please."

Just when she finished a group of men blocked their way and the leader of these men was the stern Tang Shoufang.

Silver Blossom was a bit scared of this man and saw he had already worn his leather gloves. He was about to use his secretive weapons.

Tang Shoufang loudly said: "Who goes there? Stop right now!"

Silver Blossom giggled: "You're an expert in secretive weaponry so am I. Let us compete who is the best."

They stood face to face to each other and readied themselves.

Tang Yue suddenly took out a metal tablet from his girdle and said: "Here is the tablet of the old master! Let us through!"

Tang Shoufang respectfully backed away and said: "Yes."

He told the men to move aside and let Silver Blossom and Tang Yue go.

After running for some time both of them entered the temple of the local earth deity. Silver Blossom had already marked this temple as one of their resting points.

Silver Blossom felt relieved and said: "Well, it seems that you do have a heart. If it wasn't for you taking out that tablet we would still be stuck in there."

She lit the candles in the temple and saw that Tang Yu was wearing a mask from the Chinese opera.

Silver Blossom laughed: "Why are you wearing a mask? I thought my brother-in-law was a handsome dashing fellow."

Tang Yue said: "My father doesn't want me to be recognized."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Your old man is really a strange man, remove your mask."

Tang Yue said: "My father used a special type of glue to attach this mask. The effects of the glue will wear off after a day, but if I forcibly remove it now I will pull off my skin too."

Silver Blossom was stunned and said: "How very strict! But nevermind I still remember how you look like."

Silver Blossom continued: "My sister was trying to keep you for herself but ever since I saw you. I kept thinking of you."

Tang Yue sighed: "How is your sister?"

Silver Blossom cried: "I went through all that trouble to help you escape. You didn't even thank me, all you can do is think about my sister."

Tang Yue said in a gentle voice: "Thank you for helping me. But how did you manage to come in the TangMansion in the first place?"

Silver Blossom said: "Do you know a girl called Jin Yanzi?"

Tang Yue said: "Yes I have heard of her."

Silver Blossom said: "I knew she was a close friend of the Tang family. That's why I became her sworn sister."

Tang Yue was surprised and asked: "She actually became sisters with you?"

Silver Blossom laughed: "She doesn't know my real identity, she just thinks I am a poor girl who nobody wants. She is a very gullible girl, fooling her is too easy."

Tang Yue sighed: "She is a very naive girl."

Silver Blossom continued: "To make my cover a bit more convincing I asked her whether I could put my precious treasures at the TangMansion. She complied to my request. But in fact I had already hid my treasure at a very safe place. And replaced the rest with worthless junk. I just took a few precious jewelry and gave it to your sisters and sister-in-law. As the whereabouts of my valuable luggage.....that remains a secret. But I can tell you that I don't have any financial headaches anymore for the rest of my life."

Tang Yue asked: "But what about Tang Lin?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "Your little sister is in love, so I tricked her I would help her find her lover. But she had to

take me to the cave where you were hiding.”

Tang Yue remained silent and said: “You did put a lot of effort in this operation. Your sister will be most grateful.”

Silver Blossom cried: “Again my sister, I went through all that trouble just for you. What has she done for you?”

She started to weeping sadly.

Tang Yue didn’t know what to say and said: “Why are you crying?”

Silver Blossom said rather annoyed: “You fool! Don’t you know these are tears because of you.”

Tang Yue said: “Why...why?”

Silver Blossom said: “I feel sorry for you and I don’t want to hurt you.”

Tang Yue asked: “What has happened? Why would I be hurt?”

Silver Blossom said in a trembling voice: “She...she...my sister... You shouldn’t be thinking of her now, because....because.....”

Tang Yue quickly asked: “What has happened?”

Silver Blossom said loudly: “She has found another man.”

Tang Yue was speechless.

Silver Blossom cried: “I didn’t want to tell you this but I’m too confused at the moment.”

She embraced and cried on his shoulders.

Tang Yue asked slowly: “Who is that man?”

Silver sobbed: “I cannot tell you, I have betrayed my own sister now.”

Tang Yue said: “I just want to know,....”

Silver Blossom sobbed: “I will tell you, that man is called Yu Peiyu.”

Tang Yue was surprised and said: "Yu Peiyu?"

Silver Blossom asked: "Do you know him?"

Tang Yue shook his head and said: "I have never heard of this name before."

Silver Blossom said: "Luckily you haven't met him yet, because he is the most cruel, manipulative, hypocritical and vile man in the entire realm."

Tang Yue was silent for some time and said: "Your sister doesn't love me anymore. Why are you here?"

Silver Blossom looked at him and said: "Don't you understand my feelings?"

Tang Yue shook his head and said: "No, I really don't know what you're thinking?"

Silver Blossom stamped her feet and said: "You, idiot."

Tang Yue sighed and said: "I am an idiot, otherwise...."

Silver Blossom interrupted him and said: "Don't say it! Although my sister has betrayed you. I will....."

She put up a sexy position and looked at Tang Yue.

Tang Yue embraced her too.

Silver Blossom said: "Blow out the candles."

Tang Yue said: "Don't blow them out yet, I want to look at you."

Silver Blossom pouted: "You're naughty."

Tang Yue said slowly: "I just want to see what kind of manipulative, cruel, lying and vile woman you are."

Silver Blossom was shocked to hear such words and said: "What are you saying?"

Before she could do anything Tang Yue sealed 12 acupoints on her back.

Silver Blossom fell to the ground and said: "What are you doing?"

Tang Yue said: "You said you will never forget the voice of Tang Yue, right?"

Silver Blossom said with fear in her voice: "You...you are not Tang Yue? Who are you?"

[Tang Yue] removed the mask and revealed a very beautiful face almost perfect. But there was a scar on his face but it made this person even more charismatic."

Silver Blossom said with a shaky voice: "Yu Peiyu, it is you! How can this be? Yu Peiyu, why are you here....."

Silver Blossom was really scared, her self-confidence was gone. Yu Peiyu said with a faint smile: "You never thought this would happen. You shouldn't use Yu Peiyu in your lies when you talking to Yu Peiyu. I think your luck is running up."

Silver Blossom was too shocked to say anything and just repeated softly: "It's you.....how could it be? Yu Peiyu....."

Yu Peiyu said: "Didn't you hear from Tang Lin I went to the TangMansion?"

Silver Blossom said: "Of course! You came here looking for protection from Tang Wushuang. How could I oversee this?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I was injured and couldn't go anywhere else. Tang Wushuang helped me and even let me stay in his secret cavern."

Silver Blossom felt a bit more confident and said: "The old goat even lied to his daughter. No wonder you wouldn't talk to Tang Lin earlier."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "She won't forget the voice of her own brother."

Silver Blossom asked: "So Tang Yue was originally hidden in that house?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, you're right. That day Tang Wushuang took me there and told me to exchange places with his son. I even wore his old clothes and wore the mask. Tang

Wushuang even concealed this truth from his own students.”

Silver Blossom said: “So the real Tang Yue has been relocated, where is he now?”

Yu Peiyu said: “I don’t know, even if I did know I wouldn’t tell you. I’m afraid you will never find him.”

Silver Blossom felt terrified and asked: “What....what...are you planning to do to me?”

Yu Peiyu just looked at her.

Silver Blossom loudly said: “I know you hate me for injuring your face! But I just cut you lightly, someone else used her sword to stab you several times. Why won’t you hate her? Why do you only hate me?”

She was referring to Lin Daiyu, Yu Peiyu sighed and closed his eyes. Silver Blossom was happy to see this change and said: “The reasons why I cursed and injured was because I love you. I love you very much, because you didn’t returned my love I hated you for that.”

Yu Peiyu said: “I won’t harm you, don’t worry. There are so many people in this world who have hurt me. Why should I hate you and punish you alone?”

Silver Blossom asked with joy: “You don’t hate me?”

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: “I don’t hate you and I won’t hurt you.”

Silver Blossom felt relieved and also touched, she thought that Yu Peiyu was treating her better now. She was thinking: Who knows he might even start to like me?

Yu Peiyu continued: “But I will take you back to the TangMansion.”

Silver Blossom was scared again and shouted: “You said you didn’t hate me. Why do you treat me in this way? If you take me back I will die at their hands.”

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I don't care whether you wounded me, cursed me, lied to me. I don't even want to think about that anymore. However I cannot allow you to continue causing harm to everyone else."

Silver Blossom shouted: "You're a hypocrite! You want to see me die, but you don't want to kill me yourself! Kill me now, if you have the guts! You're not even a man!"

Yu Peiyu ignored her and didn't become angry. After seeing that he didn't become angry she stopped. She didn't know what to do anymore and started to cry.

Yu Peiyu sighed: "If you would have treated people with a bit more respect in the past, I might have let you off."

Suddenly Yu Peiyu heard horses riding this way. He blew out the candles and sealed another acupoint of Silver Blossom, so she couldn't talk.

Yu Peiyu after enduring endless hardships had become even more vigilant. He embraced Silver Blossom and leapt up to a beam on the roof.

The three riders stopped in front of the temple and entered. Yu Peiyu could see what was going on but he couldn't see the faces of the riders in the dark. But he felt that one of the riders looked a bit familiar.

One of the riders said: "This way please." And he lit the candles.

Yu Peiyu almost immediately leapt down because he recognized two of the riders. One was the Flowered Chestnut Sword Lin Shoujuan and other was the Dragonking of Taihu. The other man Yu Peiyu didn't recognize but he was about 26, 27 years old and he was wearing leather gloves similar to Tang Shoufang. So Yu Peiyu concluded that he must be a disciple of the Tang Clan.

The Dragonking stroked his beard and said: "The Unparalleled Old Man arranged to meet with us here. But if

young master Tang Yu wasn't here we couldn't find this place."

The young man smiled: "My father only instructed me to notify you. He didn't reveal any of this to my sisters and other martial arts brothers or sisters."

The Dragonking smiled: "This is a private deal Tang Wushuang made with us."

Yu Peiyu was shocked and sad to see and to hear this, what kind of business did Tang Wushuang have with these two men.

The sad part was that both imposters managed to impersonate the real Lin Shoujuan and Dragonking perfectly.

The Dragonking asked: "Will your father be coming soon?"

Tang Yu said: "This is an important matter to my father I'm sure he will come."

Lin Shoujuan said: "I have heard that that fellow has good martial arts and is very cunning. Can your father deal with him?"

Tang Yu smiled: "Although that man is cunning he doesn't suspect my father. And my father has arranged for him to hide in the most secret place in the TangMansion. Even if he wasn't injured he cannot escape."

Lin Shoujuan stroked his beard and said: "The Unparalleled Old Man is very crafty."

The Dragonking said: "Young master Tang, you should know that chancellor Yu has no ill intentions towards that man. He just doesn't like that man to use the name of his late son. If that fellow is up to no good it will affect the reputation of the chancellor and the late young master Yu. That's why we don't have a choice, but....."

Tang Yu quickly said: "We completely understand."

The Dragonking smiled: "After your father has rounded up this problem successfully, chancellor Yu will certainly not

forget your father's help. He will and shall repay your father. However chancellor Yu is responsible for the entire safety of Wulin, his every movement and action will be watched. He is afraid that some people will talk if this problem gets leaked out."

Tang Yu said: "Don't worry, sir. My father and I won't reveal a word."

Yu Peiyu felt cold over his entire body. That man/fellow was him.

That imposter wouldn't leave him alone and that Tang Wushuang had betrayed him.

If it wasn't for Silver Blossom he would still be there. He was breaking out in a cold sweat.

Tang Yu said: "I hope chancellor Yu will keep up his end of the bargain."

Lin Shoujuan said earnestly: "The chancellor will always keep his word."

The Dragonking said: "But your father has to deliver us what he promised. We will take care of the Three Magnificent Flower Ladies. Chancellor Yu will only have to issue an order and a punitive expedition will be lead to annihilate a mere Heavenly Silkworm Sect."

Tang Yu said: "If chancellor Yu can help us to destroy this threat from now on all the Tang disciples will be most grateful to the chancellor."

Yu Peiyu now understood, Tang Wushuang betrayed him because he was afraid of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect and the Silver Blossom and her two sisters. He looked down upon Tang Wushuang the leader of the most famous Wulin family was a coward.

Suddenly the altar of the local earth deity moved and an opening appeared. Tang Wushuang walked out looking rather embarrassed.

Yu Peiyu never would have guessed that there was a secret tunnel leading from the mansion to this temple.

Tang Wushuang smiled apologetically: "My respects, I apologize for being late."

The Dragonking said: "Not at all, I take it that Mr. Tang has brought Yu Peiyu?"

Tang Wushuang said: "There is a small delay...."

Lin Shoujuan sternly asked: "What has happened?"

Tang Wushuang sighed: "He....Yu Peiyu has escaped."

The Dragonking loudly roared: "What!"

Tang Wushuang apologized: "I'm very sorry that this has happened."

The Dragonking angrily said: "Are you making fun of us?"

Tang Wushuang said: "I wouldn't dare....."

Lin Shoujuan said: "Even so how is it possible that he could have escaped from the TangMansion."

Tang Wushuang said: "I lured him into our cave but I forgot that I gave him one of my metal tablets. And he used the tablet to escape. I was too negligent."

The Dragonking scoffed: "Negligent!?! I'm afraid you have your own agenda, right?"

Tang Wushuang said immediately: "Absolutely not."

Lin Shoujuan said: "If there isn't an ulterior motive you are really becoming a senile old goat....."

Tang Yu, who was already quite angry this time, hit a table with his fist and shouted: "Who are you to talk to my father in this way!"

There is a saying: The older you get the more value you place on life. Tang Wushuang had lost all his courage in his final years of his life. But his son who was still young couldn't control his temper anymore.

Both Lin Shoujuan and the Dragonking were surprised by his anger.

Tang Yu continued: "Perhaps both of you have forgotten where you are. If any of us will give the order neither of you will live to see another sunrise."

The Dragonking laughed: "Young master Tang, don't get angry. We're just a bit upset about that fellow getting away. We wouldn't dare to offend old Mr. Tang."

Tang Wushuang who regained a bit of his confidence stroked his beard and said: "Even if chancellor Yu was here, he wouldn't blame me."

The Dragonking smiled mysteriously: "Really?"

All of a sudden they heard marching sounds towards the temple and before long eight men in black robes wearing big straw hats holding swords and sabres entered the temple.

Tang Wushuang asked with fear: "What....what is the meaning of this?"

At this point an elderly gentleman wearing a long green brocade walked in. With the exception of Yu Peiyu everyone recognized him as the present chancellor of Wulin, Yu Fanghe.

Tang Wushuang was sweating and said respectfully: "I didn't know the chancellor would come. Please forgive me for not receiving you."

Yu Fanghe smiled faintly: "Brother Wushuang, you're too formal."

He looked at the angry looking Tang Yu and said: "Is this your son?"

Tang Wushuang said: "Yes, chancellor. He is my unworthy son, Tang Yu."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Not bad! Worthy of being the son of the Unparalleled Old Man, how old is he?"

Tang Yu replied: "I'm 26 years old, chancellor."

Yu Fanghe said calmly: "It is amazing you're able to become 26 with your temper."

Tang Yu was stunned and angered by this remark.

Yu Fanghe continued: "Young men should respect seniors and the last thing they should consider to do is hitting a table and roaring to them. Don't you think that's a bit too rude, brother Wushuang."

Tang Yu said loudly: "But I wasn't wrong."

Tang Wushuang quickly said: "Please forgive him, chancellor Yu. I will apologize on his behalf."

Yu Fanghe coldly said: "I was talking to your son, brother Wushuang."

Tang Wushuang remained silent. Tang Yu took a deep breath and said earnestly: "I too know that one should respect your seniors, but if other people would mock or insult my father I will not tolerate that."

Yu Fanghe asked: "Not tolerate? Please elaborate?"

Tang Yu said: "I will defend my father and his honour with everything I have. Even if it means dying."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Hmmm. Very good, I admire your principles."

When he finished he waved his hand very quickly and slapped Tang Wushuang twice on his face.

Nobody knows whether it was the fear that he was dealing with the chancellor of Wulin here but Tang Wushuang couldn't or didn't avoid those two slaps.

Yu Fanghe turned to Tang Yu and asked with a smile: "Well?"

Tang Yu was furious and was about to strike, Tang Wushuang yelled: "You unfilial son! Don't be rude in front of the chancellor!"

Yu Fanghe smiled and said: "He wouldn't dare to be rude."

Again he slapped Tang Wushuang, Tang Yu had tears in his eyes and said: "Father, please forgive me for not obeying your commands."

He leapt up and flew towards Yu Fanghe. Tang Wushuang shouted: "Yu'Er, stop!"

But it was too late, Tang Yu's fist had struck Yu Fanghe on his shoulder. Tang Yu's wrist was broken and he flew backwards and landed heavily on the floor.

Yu Fanghe looking very carefree and smiled: "Brother Wushuang, your son is very bold."

Tang Wushuang knelt down and was kowtowing to Yu Fanghe. He begged: "Chancellor Yu, my son is ignorant. Please forgive him! I beg of you....."

Yu Fanghe sighed: "Of course I won't take this matter seriously, but you were also present during the gathering at Lake Huang. We agreed that anyone who offended the chancellor of Wulin should be punished. But I forgot what that punishment was?"

Tang Wushuang quickly pleaded: "I just want the chancellor to spare his life, I will chop off his both hands. And force him to acknowledge his mistakes in front of you."

Yu Fanghe casually turned to the Dragonking and asked: "Well?"

The Dragonking loudly said: "No, the rules are set we cannot change them. If we do, the principles at the gathering will never be the same again."

Yu Fanghe sighed: "Brother Wushuang, I cannot help you."

The Dragonking picked up Tang Yu and dragged him outside and in an instant they heard a cry of pain.

Tang Wushuang collapsed and cried.

If Yu Peiyu wasn't eager on finding out the truth he would have leapt down and stopped this tragedy.

Yu Fanghe sighed: "With the lost of your son, brother Wushuang must want to take revenge, right?"

Tang Wushuang got up and lowered his head and said: "My....my son was ignorant and sought his....his own....de....death...I won't blame anyone for this tragedy."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "I knew brother Wushuang was a reasonable man."

Tang Wushuang lowered his head even more, even Yu Peiyu felt embarrassed for him.

Yu Fanghe asked: "Brother Wushuang, do you know why I came here?"

Tang Wushuang said: "It must be because of that Yu Peiyu."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "You're mistaken."

Tang Wushuang said with surprise: "I'm wrong."

Yu Fanghe calmly explained: "I wanted to find out a bit more about the antecedents of this young man, I was afraid he might be my....unworthy late son. But after some investigation I know he is someone else. I do not care whether he's alive or dead."

Yu Peiyu and Tang Wushuang were both surprised to hear this, Tang Wushuang stuttered: "But...but why are you here chancellor Yu?"

Yu Fanghe said: "I want you to meet a friend?"

Tang Wushuang asked: "A friend? Which friend do you mean?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "This is a funny situation. Brother Wushuang has seen him numerous times but he has never even met you before."

Tang Wushuang had no idea what he was talking about and was also completely in the dark who he was going to meet.

But he just saw that Lin Shoujuan, the Dragonking and those eight men were smiling strangely.

Yu Peiyu was thinking too: Why is this Yu fellow here? Why did he kill Tang Yu like that. Is it because Tang Yu wasn't allowed to meet this "friend."

Who is this "friend?"

Yu Peiyu was breaking out in a cold sweat. Yu Fanghe nodded his head and one of those eight men went outside. In a minute he lead another man in wearing a long robe. However Yu Peiyu couldn't see his face from up there.

But he did noticed that Tang Wushuang was becoming very very scared when he saw that man.

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Brother Wushuang, does he look familiar?"

Tang Wushuang shouted: "He.....he.....I.....I....."

He was totally lost for words.

Yu Fanghe continued: "He wanted to meet you for a long time already. However I felt that the time wasn't right yet. Do you know why?"

Tang Wushuang trembled and said: "I don't know."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "I didn't want to see brother Wushuang die so soon."

Tang Wushuang was sweating heavily and shouted: "What do you mean with that?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Very simple! The day you meet him is the day you die."

That man walked up a bit more closely and Yu Peiyu saw his face, he looked exactly like Tang Wushuang. Identical!

He finally discovered the secret of these monsters.

Tang Wushuang was speechless.

Yu Fanghe smiled: "What do you think? A masterwork don't you think? Painters can only draw paint beautiful paintings but our masterpieces are alive. We spent a lot time and energy in producing a second Tang Wushuang. Much more

than our other masterworks. Brother Wushuang should feel proud."

Tang Wushuang trembled and asked: "But why?"

Yu Fanghe said: "You don't understand, do you? I will explain, the first Tang Wushuang has lived long enough, the second Tang Wushuang will take his place and live on."

Now the real Tang Wushuang laughed loudly.

Yu Fanghe looked at him coldly and said: "What is so funny brother Wushuang?"

Tang Wushuang laughed: "Why won't I laugh! I think this is all very amusing. You created a puppet to replace me, the real Tang Wushuang?"

Yu Fanghe coldly said: "We have succeeded many times."

Tang Wushuang said: "Now I believe the words of the dead Yu Peiyu. But I am different from Yu Fanghe, Wang Yuluo, Ximen Feng and others."

Yu Fanghe asked: "How so?"

Tang Wushuang said: "Those people do not have an entire clan like me. How can you fool all those family members of mine? Do you know the habits and my relationships towards my family members and pupils?"

Yu Fanghe said: "You're right we don't know that, but soon we will."

Tang Wushuang said: "How?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "That is not your concern anymore. And furthermore we will learn a great deal from you."

Tang Wushuang scoffed: "Do you think I will reveal anything to you and your lackeys! If you do you're mad!"

Yu Fanghe said calmly: "I'm confident you will. We have our own methods...of persuasion. Up to now no one has been able to resist us."

Suddenly they heard a whistle, Yu Fanghe said: "Someone is coming, everyone leave this place quietly!"

The Dragonking looked at Tang Wushuang and said: "What about him?"

Yu Fanghe said: "Cover his head and take him along."

Tang Wushuang took advantage of the situation and took out his secretive weapons and shot them toward his enemies. Yu Fanghe ordered: "Don't move! I will deal with him personally."

He took one of the those straw hats those eight men wore and twirled it around to block those 10 odd secretive weapons.

Tang Wushuang raised his palms and advanced forward, the Tang Clan was also famous for their palm and fist techniques.

Tang Wushuang fiercely attacked Yu Fanghe, Yu Fanghe avoided those stances and asked: "You really dare to attack me?"

Tang Wushuang scoffed: "You wouldn't kill me, I'm still of use to you."

Tang Wushuang only used the most lethal stances, stances to kill the opponent but also disregarding your own life.

Yu Fanghe didn't counter-attack he just simply avoided the stance of Tang Wushuang. Lin Shoujuan, the Dragonking and those eight henchmen stood there looking confident. It seems that they already know the outcome of this battle. And the loser is sure to be Tang Wushuang.

Yu Peiyu was very anxious to see the martial arts of this Yu Fanghe, he hoped to determine this imposter's identity by looking at his martial arts. But when he saw his movements to block the secretive weapons of Tang Wushuang and how he avoided the stances he was shocked. This imposter was using orthodox XiantianWujiSchool martial arts, and judging

by his movements he was certainly not inferior to the real Yu Fanghe. But how can this be?

Yu Peiyu recognized the movements of this Yu Fanghe, the martial arts of the XiantianWujiSchool place emphasis on elegance and refinement. The imposter has managed to master both these qualities.

Yu Fanghe laughed: "Brother Wushuang, you're trapped. What can you do anymore?"

During his laugh he struck out his right palm gently and easily avoided the block of Tang Wushuang. Tang Wushuang received a blow on the chest and fell down.

It was unbelievable that within one stroke the famous Unparalleled Old Man was defeated.

Yu Fanghe turned to those men and said: "Take him away!"

Yu Fanghe, Lin Shoujuan, the Dragonking and others left the temple.

Yu Peiyu was horrified but also happy that he finally found a clue to their plans.

Fortunately Yu Peiyu was able to stay hidden from these conspirators. He thought this was the best chance to follow them and find out what their plans are.

Silver Blossom who was unable to move or speak heard everything. Yu Peiyu whispered into her ear: "I wanted to take you back to the TangMansion. But now....from now on whatever happened between us will be forgotten. You will be able to move in a short while. I hope you won't come after me again and I will also not see you anymore in the future."

He wanted to leap down and follow Yu Fanghe and his henchmen.

By this time the Dragonking and two other men came back to the temple.

Chapter 15 : A Strong Will

Zhong Jing felt a powerful energy forcing her back and she saw that Yu Peiyu's movements were utterly magnificent. She thought she saw an immortal in front of her moving gracefully.

The martial arts of the XiantianWujiSchool place emphasis on elegance, refinement. The stances of this school appear to graceful, ancient and a hint of divinity.

The Dragonking ordered the two men: "Clean up the mess here! And put the statue back at his original place. We don't want any Tang disciples finding out that old man Tang was here."

Yu Peiyu was going mad he hoped that they would hurry up and finish, he was afraid that Yu Fanghe would be too far gone.

But these three men were very careful and thorough, suddenly three metallic objects shot towards the Dragonking and the two men. The two men were hit and fell down, the Dragonking leapt away just in time.

He took out his Golden Dragon Whip and shouted: "Who dares to injure the warriors of chancellor Yu!"

He whirled his whip in front of him and dashed out the door, there was a strange sinister evil laughter coming from outside.

Yu Peiyu was surprised to see this, but he knew that the attacker was an expert and his secretive weapons were very lethal.

Could it be that the Tang disciples have arrived?

Before long the Dragonking backed into the temple again, he had lowered his weapon and was sweating heavily.

A voice said: "Friend, who are you? Why are you here?"

The voice sounded tempting and mesmeric.

A figure walked into the temple too, it was a tall character. Yu Peiyu could now see that it was an elderly looking distinguished man. But his eyes looked very sinister.

The Dragonking responded: "My family name is Wang, I'm from TaihuLake."

The elderly man said: "You're the Dragonking of Taihu, but why are you here?"

The Dragonking said: "I was here with the chancellor of Wulin."

The man asked: "Yu Fanghe?"

The Dragonking said: "Yes, we were here to meet Tang Wushuang."

The Dragonking couldn't help himself; he answered every question this man asked him. Yu Peiyu was glad too because he could finally learn a bit more about the secrets of the mastermind.

The man asked: "Why did Yu Fanghe meet Tang Wushuang here? What were they discussing? Was it a secret?"

The Dragonking said: "There is a secret, chancellor Yu....."

Yu Peiyu was now very anxious. But the Dragonking stopped talking. The man asked: "Tell me the secret."

The Dragonking was sweating heavily, the man continued: "You can tell me, I won't harm you."

The Dragonking was trembling he couldn't help himself and said: "I cannot tell you. I can't tell you!"

The voice continued: "Don't forget you belong to me. Your soul and body are mine."

The Dragonking laughed loudly and said: "No, I belong to chancellor Yu. I can't betray him and I won't betray him if I do I will die."

He raised his iron whip and hit himself on the head.

The man was surprised too, the Dragonking lied dead in a pool of blood.

Suddenly Yu Peiyu heard a young woman's voice saying: "They're all dead."

The man turned around said: "You are right, they are all dead."

The woman's voice sounded familiar to Yu Peiyu but he couldn't think of who it was.

The young woman said: "Why did you kill them? They haven't done anything to you."

The man smiled: "You're right again, I shouldn't have killed them. Your eyes look so pretty. I fell in love with your beautiful eyes."

The girl blushed and felt very happy, at this time she entered the temple too.

Yu Peiyu recognized her as the Huashan disciple Zhong Jing, Yu Peiyu thought it was strange that she would be in the company of this strange man.

Zhong Jing sighed: "I just want to spend the rest of my life with you. I don't want to get involved into the realm of martial arts anymore."

The man said: "Soon there will be such a day."

Zhong Jing sighed: "If that day comes I will be so happy, then all the things I did were worth it."

The man inspected the Dragonking's body and said softly to himself: "Even with my hypnotic powers I couldn't force him to reveal his secrets. That Yu Fanghe is really something."

Suddenly he saw something at the altar and said to Zhong Jing: "There is a secret here, it must be some sort of secret tunnel."

Zhong Jing asked: "Where does it lead too?"

The man smiled: "This temple is build on the land of the Tangs and over this hill is the TangMansion."

Zhong Jing said: "Yes, of course it must lead to the TangMansion."

The man praised: "You're a very smart and pretty girl."

Zhong Jing pulled the man's arm and said: "Let us go, we shouldn't be here."

The man said: "No, my biggest joy is finding out the secrets of other people."

Zhong Jing asked: "Don't go."

The man coldly said: "Why? Are you afraid that I won't come back."

Zhong Jing who hadn't noticed the change in his voice said: "No, but I'm just worried about you. Tang Wushuang and Yu Fanghe are very formidable people."

That man laughed: "They can't harm me. Just stay here and wait for me, allright." He gently touched her hair.

That man entered the secret tunnel, Zhong Jing stood there and softly said: "Is this right what I'm doing?.....I don't know....."

At this moment she heard a voice saying: "No, this is not right."

Zhong Jing called out: "Who is it?"

She saw a handsome young man making a somersault down from a beam.

The young man smiled: "I am Yu Peiyu."

Zhong Jing shrieked: "Yu Peiyu?"

She knew a Yu Peiyu once but he is dead, and hearing the name of a dead man is quite eerie.

Especially in the night and in an old temple like this one.

But she was quite captivated by this young man but she still backed away and said: "I know a Yu Peiyu, but you're not him. I don't know you."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "But I know you, you're Miss Zhong Jing of the Huashan School."

Zhong Jing sternly said: "You're here to capture us!"

Yu Peiyu asked: "Miss, what have you done? Why are there people after you?"

Zhong Jing felt relieved when she heard that and smiled: "I didn't do anything, I was just testing you."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I didn't mean to overhear your secret, but I would advise to go back."

Zhong Jing asked with surprise: "Go back? Where to?"

Yu Peiyu continued: "To your teacher, she will protect you."

Zhong Jing loudly said: "I don't need protection and who are you to give your opinion about my life."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "It is not my custom to interfere with other people's affairs but there are some things I have to say. Whether you listen to my advice is entirely up to you."

He looked at the bodies of the Dragonking and the two men and sighed.

He looked at the beam and knew Silver Blossom would be alright, an intelligent girl like her knows how to take care of herself.

Before Yu Peiyu walked out the temple, a shadow blocked his way. Zhong Jing happily said: "You're back so soon."

The man said: "Maybe a bit too soon?"

Zhong Jing didn't hear the sarcasm in his tone and asked: "Have you seen Yu Fanghe or Tang Wushuang?"

The man said: "I didn't see any of them." He turned to Yu Peiyu and said: "Isn't that strange?"

Yu Peiyu didn't know who this man was and also didn't know on which side he was.

Suddenly Yu Peiyu was captivated by the man's eyes.

The man repeated his question: "Isn't that strange?"

Yu Peiyu smiled and said: "That is strange."

The man said: "Well, why won't you tell me what you saw."

Yu Peiyu only stared into those strange eyes of that man and didn't know what to say now.

The man looked at Yu Peiyu too and said: "You have a very handsome face. Even I am charmed by your appearances. You should make use of your face, if you don't know how to do that. I will help you make use of your handsome face."

Normally Yu Peiyu would become very angry when he heard something like this but now he seemed to be very calm and listened only to the man.

The man continued: "What did you see earlier? Why were Tang Wushuang and Yu Fanghe meeting each other here?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I don't think you want to know."

The man said in a serious tone: "I want to know. And if I tell you to tell me, you should just tell me."

The eyes of the man seemed to be glowing but Yu Peiyu still said: "I really don't think you want to know."

The man became a bit annoyed and took out a necklace and dangled it before Yu Peiyu and said: "You are my slave, my every word will be your command. You won't resist me."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I don't like being a slave, I like to be free and hate taking orders."

The man was sweating now, because if the user of the hypnotic fails to put his victim under it, he himself will fall victim.

This man didn't know that Yu Peiyu had an extremely high self-control. His father had trained very well, and his will

power was unbelievably strong.

Yu Peiyu smiled: "You were just joking, weren't you?"

The man replied: "Yes, I was."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What is your name?"

The man said: "Guo Pianxian."

Guo Pianxian finally had a taste of his own medicine he was victim of his own hypnotic spell.

Yu Peiyu said: "Guo Pianxian? Your name doesn't ring a bell, is that your real name?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Yes, it is."

Yu Peiyu was a bit surprised too, he wondered why Guo Pianxian would answer all of his questions.

Yu Peiyu asked: "Are you and Miss Zhong running from someone? And who are you running from?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Yes we are being pursued by Xu Shuzhen."

Yu Peiyu was surprised and said: "The leader of the HuashanSchool? Were you captured by master Xu? And I take it that Miss Zhong fell in love with you and secretly freed you?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Yes, that is what happened."

Yu Peiyu sighed and turned to Zhong Jing: "Miss Zhong betrayed her school and teacher for Guo Pianxian. Miss Zhong must be really....."

Because Yu Peiyu turned to Zhong Jing, Guo Pianxian didn't feel the pressure Yu Peiyu was giving him anymore. He flung his necklace towards Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu was surprised that this man would attack now. He spun around and faced Guo Pianxian. Yu Peiyu's arms folded open, like lotus opening his petals.

His movements were very graceful like an immortal performing a graceful dance. The necklace was broken and

fell into pieces on the floor.

Zhong Jing felt a powerful energy forcing her back and she saw that Yu Peiyu's movements were utterly magnificent. She thought she saw an immortal in front of her moving gracefully.

The martial arts of the XiantianWujiSchool place emphasis on elegance, refinement. The stances of this school appear to graceful, ancient and a hint of divinity.

Zhong Jing called out: "Good martial arts!"

Guo Pianxian attacked with four stances, his palms were directed towards the chest of Yu Peiyu. He didn't attack with full power, he was a bit cautious especially seeing Yu Peiyu's movements. He only used 50% of his internal strength, he didn't want to use up all his power now.

Yu Peiyu avoided his attacks and said: "Do you really want to kill me? But why? We haven't met before."

Guo Pianxian continued his attacks and said: "With you alive I will feel most restless."

Suddenly he changed from fast to slow, his fists were moving very slow but were more stable and powerful.

Yu Peiyu called out: "Taiji Fist?"

The TaijiSchool and XiantianWujiSchool were befriended with each other. Yu Peiyu leapt away and asked: "Sir, are you a senior of the TaijiSchool?"

Yu Peiyu knew with Guo Pianxian's internal strength and age he should be a senior of the TaijiSchool.

Guo Pianxian scoffed: "TaijiSchool isn't good enough, I don't belong to such an inferior school."

Now his stances became fierce and robust, Yu Peiyu recognized this form and thought: Shaolin's Arhat Tiger Subdueing Fist!

Then he changed style again, now he used the Gigant Wave Fist.

After two stances he changed styles again now his fists aimed at the shoulders of Yu Peiyu, but suddenly he quickly changed positions and were headed for his chest.

Guo Pianxian laughed: "Do you recognize this style?"

Yu Peiyu had no alternative to counter this technique and used his palms to receive his two fists. Guo Pianxian felt an enormous surge of energy coming through Yu Peiyu's arms and staggered backwards.

Guo Pianxian was unable to cope with Yu Peiyu's internal strength. Yu Peiyu was born with tremendous strength and he received a very good internal energy training from his father. So his internal power was as good as any top experts in Wulin, perhaps even better.

Furthermore Guo Pianxian only used 50% of his power.

Zhong Jing yelled: "Don't harm him!"

She turned to Guo Pianxian and said: "Let's go! You don't have to fight him."

Guo Pianxian turned to Yu Peiyu and smiled wryly: "Your martial arts aren't that refined either. You just have tremendous strength and in combination with good internal strength. I've never seen anything like this before. I am no match for you."

Yu Peiyu said: "Why won't you leave?"

Guo Pianxian sighed: "You leave me no other choice."

He got up and was about to leave but suddenly he threw a dozen black objects towards Yu Peiyu. Zhong Jing shrieked: "Why...."

Before she could finish Guo Pianxian picked her up and chucked her towards Yu Peiyu too.

Guo Pianxian quickly shifted behind Yu Peiyu's back.

A very lethal and vicious technique this was.

If Yu Peiyu wanted to avoid those metallic objects, which by the way wasn't easy. But if he did Zhong Jing would come crashing down on him, and if he turned around to defend himself from Guo Pianxian it would be likely he will be hit by Zhong Jing.

But if Yu Peiyu would try to catch Zhong Jing, Guo Pianxian will attack him in the back.

This change of events was too quick for words, the metallic objects came flying towards him and Zhong Jing was just behind those secretive weapons.

Yu Peiyu could use his sleeve to repel those weapons but then Zhong Jing will be killed by those secretive weapons.

Guo Pianxian guessed that Yu Peiyu wouldn't let Zhong Jing die.

However Yu Peiyu did counter-attack those two flying objects, he generated a Yin power to his left palm and a Yang force to his right palm.

He pushed out his left palm first, a gentle force pushed Zhong Jing softly away and he soon pushed out his right palm repelling those metallic objects.

At this time Guo Pianxian generated his internal strenght to his palms and was about to strike Yu Peiyu on the back.

Anyone else would likely be killed by Guo Pianxian.

Suddenly Yu Peiyu changed the energy to his right palm from Yang to Yin. The repelled objects were hit by a gentle force and made a U turn and flew towards Guo Pianxian.

Guo Pianxian never expected to see his own secretive weapons flying towards him, if he struck Yu Peiyu he will be hit by his own weapons.

Although the attack of Guo Pianxian was crafty but Yu Peiyu's counter-measure was even more superb.

He quickly leapt back to avoid the nails, but his sleeve was pierced anyway.

Yu Peiyu was furious, how could Guo Pianxian treat the woman who saved his life and loves him this way. Yu Peiyu now attacked fully and showed no mercy in his stances.

Guo Pianxian had no choice but to fight back, Guo Pianxian was no match for you Yu Peiyu. Also he was injured by Jin Yanzi not too long ago. Before long he could only defend and not attack anymore.

Yu Peiyu was still very vigilant he learnt from first hand that this Guo Pianxian is very crafty and mastered many types of martial arts.

Suddenly Guo Pianxian asked: "Do you really want to kill me? But why? We haven't met before."

He used the same sentence Yu Peiyu used earlier to question his attack.

Yu Peiyu answered: "With you alive I will feel most restless." Yu Peiyu used the same answer Guo Pianxian used earlier. At this moment Yu Peiyu really did want to kill this man, he felt that he was a menace to Wulin.

Guo Pianxian was driven into a corner, Zhong Jing stood near the door and cried.

Guo Pianxian sighed: "Very good! I might as well die, the most dearest woman in my life won't even help me now."

Zhong Jing cried: "If you're dead I will die too."

Guo Pianxian sighed: "No, you don't have to die. Follow him!"

Yu Peiyu was even more angry now and struck out his palm out with full force.

Guo Pianxian's palms suddenly folded open like the petals of a flower. Yu Peiyu couldn't continue his attack and was also a bit surprised to see this technique. This was a secret stance of the Baihua Association.

Guo Pianxian didn't want anyone to know his relationship to Madame Hai Tang, that's why he isn't too keen on using her

martial arts. And he likes to keep his identity as an elder of the Beggars Association hidden too, that's why he won't use the martial arts of the Beggars Association either.

But if he is really in lots of danger he will have no choice but to use his most skilled martial arts.

Yu Peiyu thought: Is his original martial arts school the Baihua Association?

Yu Peiyu leapt aside and asked: "Are you a disciple of the Baihua Association?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Haven't you heard that that association only accepts women."

Yu Peiyu said: "But how do you know the martial arts of the Baihua Association?"

Guo Pianxian loudly said: "I also know the martial arts of Shaolin and Wudang."

Yu Peiyu stared at him for some time and said: "It is obvious you're connected to the Baihua Association, but why conceal it?"

Guo Pianxian laughed: "I only regret that my wounds are not recovered yet. If I wasn't injured in the first place you wouldn't gain the upper hand this quickly, I have nothing else to say. I will not beg for my life!"

Yu Peiyu was surprised to see pride in this man; he thought a vile man like him would not have such a grandeur.

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Since you have your pride why use such lowly techniques?"

Guo Pianxian scoffed: "I only place value on my own life. If you think you can threaten my life with death you're sadly mistaken."

Yu Peiyu was stunned, he already knew this man was shameless but his pride was something he didn't count on.

From the beginning he had an entirely wrong impression of this man.

Guo Pianxian asked: "Why do keep asking about my connection to the Baihua Association?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I vowed never to fight with disciples of the Baihua Association."

Guo Pianxian's face changed and said: "Why! Are you related to Madame Hai Tang?"

Before Yu Peiyu could answer, Zhong Jing stormed towards Guo Pianxian and shouted: "You promised me you wouldn't mention her name again."

Guo Pianxian gave her an angry look, Zhong Jing shouted: "Why are you interested in the relationships of that woman? Are you jealous?"

Guo Pianxian stared at her for some time and sighed: "You're the one who is jealous."

Zhong Jing shouted: "I knew that you didn't love me, from the moment you flung me towards this man I knew it. You wouldn't use her like that. Now you hope I will die soon, right?"

Guo Pianxian said: "If you're dead I will die too."

Zhong Jing was calmed down by this and started to cry again, Yu Peiyu was completely confused by this strange situation.

Guo Pianxian said: "Now you know my relationship with the Baihua Association?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Yes, I do."

Guo Pianxian gently stoked Zhong Jing's hair and said: "Such a sweet girl! I never thought she would become this jealous."

Yu Peiyu asked with surprise: "Are you going to kill her?"

Guo Pianxian said: "No I won't kill her. Although she revealed my secret to you, but I won't blame her. I can kill many people for many reasons but I won't kill people for becoming jealous."

Yu Peiyu looked at him in a suspicious way and said: "You actually are touched by this?"

Guo Pianxian suddenly looked lonely and said: "Although I have had many women in my life but those women never showed such jealousy before."

After a moment Yu Peiyu said: "Those are your secrets. Why are you telling me?"

Guo Pianxian smiled lightly: "If I failed to kill a certain person I will consider him my best friend. That way I will feel much better in my heart.....But I can tell you this, up till now I only have three friends."

Yu Peiyu just looked at him and didn't know what to do with such a remark.

Guo Pianxian said: "You're number three."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "How do you know that I will consider you a friend."

Guo Pianxian said proudly: "I'm a very powerful man in Wulin, and one of the richest man in the world. Whoever becomes my friend will only benefit from my friendship."

Yu Peiyu said casually: "I am not a man who only makes friends with people because they rich and powerful."

He walked towards the door.

Guo Pianxian yelled: "Friend, please wait!"

Yu Peiyu stopped walking but didn't turn around, he said calmly: "Are you going to try to kill me, because we couldn't become friends."

Guo Pianxian said: "I don't need to try and find out whether I can kill a certain or not. But....why do you keep me at arm's length."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I don't want to fight you because of your.....connection with the Baihua Association. As for being friends, well I wouldn't dream of imposing."

Guo Pianxian asked: "Do you find me vile and repulsive?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Well, aren't you?"

Guo Pianxian smiled: "Poison can kill people but if you use it correctly it can also be used to cure people. Do you agree? Fight poison with poison! Evil people work the same way, change its direction and the outcome might not be as bad as you think."

Yu Peiyu thought over his words and said softly: "Fight poison with poison."

Guo Pianxian said: "With your abilities and if we work together within three years I can promise you. We will rule Wulin."

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "I do not have such ambitions."

Guo Pianxian said: "A man should always try to build an empire of his own. To be successful in life. If Yu Fanghe can become the chancellor of Wulin why can't you and I become it too? Furthermore this Yu Fanghe may look like a gentleman but there is something sinister about him. Sooner or later I will find out his secrets....."

Yu Peiyu turned around and looked very excited and loudly said: "Allright! It's a deal. From now on we will join forces and unite ourselves against those hypocrites. I want them to know who Yu Peiyu is."

Guo Pianxian was a bit startled by his sudden change but soon he felt happy too and put out his hand and said: "It is a deal! We won't regret this. No one will be allowed to back out of this alliance" And started laughing loudly.

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Do I look like a man who will go back on his words."

A voice from the roof laughed: "I don't think the two of you are able enough to rule Wulin."

Yu Peiyu knew it was Silver Blossom, she could move again. Yu Peiyu didn't use much force to seal her acupoints.

Guo Pianxian was shocked but didn't show it and asked in a sinister way: "In your opinion what is still missing?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "Me!"

She gently descended from the roof and looked ever so charming, Guo Pianxian was also surprised to see such a beautiful young girl.

Silver Blossom asked: "What do you think?"

Guo Pianxian nodded: "Not bad, not bad at all."

Silver Blossom sighed: "Unfortunately I don't have a mirror, otherwise I would like to see for myself."

Zhong Jing was angered by Silver Blossom and asked angrily: "Who are you? What do you want? Why were you eavesdropping on us?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "You gave me quite a scare. Don't talk to loud I scare easily."

Zhong Jing said: "Alright! Leave!"

Silver Blossom laughed: "No need to get jealous, if I really wanted to steal away your man. All I have to do is wiggle my finger and he is mine."

Zhong Jing was very angry but didn't know what to say. Yu Peiyu said: "You shouldn't bully honest young woman like Miss Zhong."

Silver Blossom giggled: "I knew my young master Yu is a real gentleman, please don't get angry with me. I'm only afraid of you in this entire world."

She looked at Guo Pianxian and said: "He and I both lost at the hands of young master Yu. If young master Yu wants us to sit down we wouldn't dream of getting up."

She easily aligned herself with Guo Pianxian with just a few words. Yu Peiyu knew she was up to her old tricks but didn't know what to do with her. So he sighed: "What are you thinking of?"

Silver Blossom said: "I just told you."

Yu Peiyu said: "Do you care to explain that?"

Silver Blossom smiled: "If the both of you want to dominate Wulin, you're still missing one important aspect. But if I join forces with you.....We will surely succeed, we will become unstoppable."

Guo Pianxian laughed: "You want to join our alliance."

Silver Blossom smiled: "I'm your fourth friend."

Guo Pianxian examined her and said: "With your credentials you can even be the concubine of the emperor, but being my fourth friend.....You're not fit yet."

Silver Blossom said: "What? Am I not as good as your lovers?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Lovers and friends are two entirely different things. I have so many lovers that I lost count, but I only have three friends. Two of them are long dead now."

Silver Blossom asked: "What does it take to become your friend?"

Guo Pianxian asked: "What do you have to offer?"

Silver Blossom said: "Although I'm not the most beautiful woman in the world, but I can make men very happy. Care to try?"

Guo Pianxian smiled: "I'm sure you are, and I will soon find out. But still not enough."

Silver Blossom continued: "I'm also a very powerful woman, with one order I can call up about 3000 men at my disposal."

Which is true as an elder of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect she can easily call up her disciples.

Guo Pianxian said: "Extra help is always good, but we need to feed those extra men too."

Silver Blossom said: "I'm also a very rich woman and if you don't believe I will show you."

Guo Pianxian said: "You're getting close."

Yu Peiyu said: "That's not enough."

Silver Blossom looked at him and said: "Don't forget I'm a vile woman. If you want to fight poison with poison I'm your woman....Besides sometimes the best man for the job is a woman."

Yu Peiyu thought about what she said and smiled: "You're right. Accepted."

Silver Blossom asked Guo Pianxian: "What about you?"

Guo Pianxian laughed: "You're number four."

Silver Blossom clapped her hands and giggled: "Now, who dares to oppose us? Whoever is in our way we regret the day he/she was born."

Exactly one day ago Yu Peiyu would have never dreamt he would become friends with Guo Pianxian and let alone join forces with the likes of Silver Blossom and Guo Pianxian. However now he thought differently.

At the gathering of LakeHuang all the orthodox Wulin people have been subjected to Yu Fanghe. They see Yu Fanghe as their leader, how can Yu Peiyu fight him. Yu Peiyu has no power and no support. He has to take another route to battle his enemies, fight poison with poison.

He now found out that the leader of the famous Tang Clan was in fact no better than Silver Blossom. Or even worse than her.

By joining forces with this lot he has gained a few strong allies against his so-called righteous enemies.

Silver Blossom lead the way, she lead them to a graveyard. Zhong Jing tightly held on to Guo Pianxian's hand.

She hatefully said to Silver Blossom: "Why are taking us here? What are you planning?"

Silver Blossom giggled: "Are you afraid little sister? These places can be eerie but also lots of fun."

Zhong Jing said with surprise: "Fun?"

Silver Blossom said: "Yes, nights like these the spirits come back and perform a nice dance."

The wind was howling at this moment and Zhong Jing got the shivers just by hearing the wind.

She deliberately said: "If they do appear I will dance with them."

Silver Blossom laughed: "They love beautiful young women like you, I'm sure they won't like it to part with you. They might even take you back to their graves."

Zhong Jing was shivering, and Silver Blossom was laughing loudly to see her afraid.

Guo Pianxian: "Very clever of you to hide your treasure here."

Silver Blossom praised: "Very good! You guessed that I hid my treasure here. We're really made from the same type of wood; we really belong to each other."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I do hope that there aren't many people made from that type of wood in the world."

Silver Blossom smiled: "Don't worry there aren't many. Furthermore two are enough."

And she smiled towards Guo Pianxian, who returned the smile.

Zhong Jing angrily said: "If you want to seduce men, pick a different place!"

Silver Blossom giggled: "My, my aren't we a jealous little girl!"

Yu Peiyu frowned: "Did you put your belongings into a grave?"

Silver Blossom said: "Yes, I found two unemployed bums invited them for some drinks. When they were tipsy and

lured them here and told them to dig up a new grave. Anyway I removed the corpse and put my treasure inside.”

She asked Yu Peiyu: “Clever, right? You only have poor people living in this small town. Even grave robbers wouldn’t bother in this town. The only things that will know about my little treasure are the ghosts.”

Guo Pianxian smiled: “What about those two bums?”

Silver Blossom giggled: “You’re very sharp. Since they helped me I invited them for another drink just to reward them. Not everyone is lucky enough to taste my special wine. (sigh*) Unfortunately before they could finish the bottle they somehow dropped dead.”

This sort of deceiving, killing is absolutely natural to her. She didn’t feel ashamed of it, in fact she felt quite proud about it. She even thought it was a funny anecdote.

Guo Pianxian smiled to Yu Peiyu: “Brother Yu, those two men were willing to work for her. It is unlikely that they were any good characters. I don’t mind even if a dozen of those men died, do you agree with me brother Yu?”

Yu Peiyu didn’t know what to say, he just sighed.

Silver Blossom suddenly stopped in front of a grave and said: “This is it, the 27th grave counting from the east. There is even a little plant which I planted.”

Yu Peiyu casually said: “We trust you on matters like these.”

Silver Blossom said: “There is no corpse in here just some dirt.”

Yu Peiyu nodded, Silver Blossom said: “I know young master Yu doesn’t like to rob graves. But digging up dirt is not too much to ask, right?”

Yu Peiyu didn’t speak, but in fact she didn’t need to say that. The Yu Peiyu we see before us is different. He understands that in times of chaos extreme measures have to be taken, he isn’t that strict anymore with values and etiquette.

After digging for some time they found the coffin, Silver Blossom said: "This is the coffin. I made a small mark on it, I also remember that the deceased was a young married woman. She was very angry that her husband took a concubine that she got a heart attack and died."

She turned to Zhong Jing and smiled: "She is almost as jealous as you."

Zhong Jing grunted.

Silver Blossom giggled: "I heard that if you remove the body from the coffin the spirit will still rest in it. If I open I'm sure she will look for Miss Zhong. I suggest you stand back."

Zhong Jing tried to be courageous but still paced back a few steps.

Silver Blossom who wanted to scream loudly to scare Zhong Jing suddenly shrieked: "AHHHH!"

There was no treasure but only a decayed corpse of a young married woman. It seemed that she was looking at Silver Blossom and said: "Not only has my spirit returned but my body is back too."

Silver Blossom said: "Impossible! I....I....put the treasure...the body was....removed....."

She sat down totally confused and scared.

There was a note in the hands of the body, Guo Pianxian took out and read: The little tramp drove me to death when I was alive, now that I am dead you want to steal my house as well.

Guo Pianxian was shivering too, this was too strange even for him.

Only Yu Peiyu remained calm, he has seen things ten times stranger than this. He asked: "Did someone see you bury the treasure?"

Silver Blossom who already got up said: "No....no..." She was still shaking with fear.

Yu Peiyu said: "That is strange. The only possibility I can come up with is that those two bums came back from their graves. But other than....."

Suddenly they heard a loud voice saying: "Good wine! Give me another bottle!"

Another voice said: "It is a good vintage, but after drinking it my stomach hurts."

In a distant they saw two figures holding red lanterns walking, but in the dark it felt like two red glowing apparitions. It looked very eerie.

Suddenly Silver Blossom shrieked: "Those....those are the two bums...it is them."

Volume 4 - Ten Highly Skilled Pugilists

Chapter 16 - Winning Against All Odds

This Yu Fanghe smiled: "Yu Peiyu? It's surprising that you have the same name like my late son."

Yu Peiyu looked at Tang Wushuang and Yu Fanghe and his heart was practically bleeding but smiled: "That is a coincidence and I feel honoured."

Yu Fanghe asked with a smile: "What can I do for you, young master Yu?"

Guo Pianxian took her hand and asked: "Did you use the right kind of poison?"

Silver Blossom shouted: "Disciples of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect never make such mistakes."

The man carrying the lantern came closer and said: "Do you think mere poison can harm us?"

The other man laughed: "We came back to take you to the grave with us."

Now they stood close enough, Yu Peiyu, Guo Pianxian saw that blood was flowing from their eyes, nose, mouth and ears.

Guo Pianxian shouted: "Well, you've returned from the dead, now you can go back again."

He waved his hand and ten poisonous needles shot from his sleeve. The two men cried out and fell down.

Guo Pianxian laughed: "Some ghosts, can't even take a few needles."

Silver Blossom said softly: "They were already dead once, how come they were still alive."

Yu Peiyu suddenly thought of something and said:"Could other disciples of your sect have an antidote too?"

Silver Blossom got up and walked to inspect the bodies and started to laugh loudly.

Guo Pianxian asked:"Why are you laughing? Isn't that blood on their faces?"

Silver Blossom didn't answer and smiled:"Father, are you here? Why won't you come out?"

Nobody answered.

Silver Blossom said:"Father, you were following me all the time. You must have seen where I have hidden the treasure and when I poisoned these two bums you rescued them. You knew I would return sooner or later so you instructed them to give me a scare." She continued to giggle:"Well, I have had my punishment. You almost scared me to death, please come out and let me see you."

Suddenly a cold voice said:"You dare to keep the treasure to yourself. Don't you know that this treasure belongs to our sect. This is was just a small punishment, for the crime you have committed you deserve to die. If you weren't my daughter I would have taken your life."

The voice slowly died out.

Silver Blossom said softly:"He took everything....."

Guo Pianxian was silent for some time but soon laughed:"A father who scares the living daylights out of his own daughter. What a laugh!"

Silver Blossom sighed:"Do you think he just wanted to scare me?"

Guo Pianxian asked:"Well, didn't he?"

Silver Blossom said:"He thought I was alone, after I would have the scare of my life, in which I would probably pass out. He will have dealt with me according to sect regulations. I

would have died without knowing who killed me, that's the way of our sect."

Yu Peiyu frowned:" But he's your father."

Silver Blossom said casually:" Father? In his eyes I'm no different from all his other subjects, there is no love in the Heavenly Silkworm Sect only regulations. He didn't kill me today because he still had some reservations about the two of you." She giggled:" If he was an emotional man, he wouldn't become the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect."

Guo Pianxian sighed:" Very formidable! The hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect is indeed a ruthless man. My respects."

Silver Blossom giggled:" Like father, like daughter. I'm a chip of the old block. I don't blame him for trying to kill me, in fact I feel proud to have a father like him."

Guo Pianxian coldly said:" You're penniless, what is there to be proud of."

Silver Blossom giggled:" We do look alike, you're thinking without money I have no use. But you're wrong....."

Guo Pianxian suddenly asked:" Did you hide your treasure somewhere else?"

Silver Blossom nodded and smiled:" Well, I didn't know if anyone was following me. So I divided the treasure into two halves and the other half is somewhere else."

Guo Pianxian asked:" Where?"

Silver Blossom smiled:" Somewhere you will never guess."

Hiding a treasure in a coffin was strange and eerie enough, where could this other place be?

Silver Blossom lead them to a small village, Guo Pianxian, Yu Peiyu and Zhong Jing were surprised.

Silver Blossom smiled:" You were thinking I was leading you to some dark mysterious place, but now our business is right

here in this small town." She continued:"This is the Family Li Village, up ahead is the family Li inn. I lodged there some time ago for a few days."

Zhong Jing asked:"You hid the treasure in an inn?"

Silver Blossom said:"Correct, I used a large black cloth to wrap up my precious belongings and put it on a beam on the roof top."

Zhong Jing scoffed:"Some safe place! Even a small child can find it."

Silver Blossom laughed:"Sister Zhong, you're an intelligent girl. But there are many things you still have to learn. Ask him?"

Zhong Jing turned to Guo Pianxian, Guo explained:"No one will go look for the most obvious places for anything valuable. They expect you to put somewhere secretive."

Silver Blossom said:"No one will expect me to put the treasure on the roof top of the main hall in this inn." Silver Blossom smiled:"Do you understand now?"

Zhong Jing sneered:"I will never understand these underhanded tricks."

Silver Blossom said:"You're right, you just know how to become jealous."

Zhong Jing was furious but again didn't know what to say.

Silver Blossom said:"We should go up the roof of the neighbouring residence. From there we can see whether it is safe to go in."

Guo Pianxian praised:"You're also a very cautious woman."

Silver Blossom said:"Cautious people live longer. Besides the three of us are very cautious men and women."

The four of them had no difficulty getting up the roof, this was the same spot where Mei Simang and Jin Yanzi spied on Silver Blossom and the Four Beasts. However just like Mei Simang and Jin Yanzi they were stunned too about what they

saw. They saw a fairly large group of men and women standing around two old men. The two old men were playing a game of go. The two players are Yu Fanghe and Tang Wushuang. The people watching are all famous martial artists, the four of them were absolutely shocked and Guo Pianxian and Zhong Jing were also very much afraid.

Guo Pianxian was also surprised to see Yu Fanghe and Tang Wushuang playing go. He thought their secret meeting was about something important. It seems they were just playing a game of chess.

Yu Peiyu was startled to see Tang Wushuang, he wondered if this Tang Wushuang was an imposter too.

Silver Blossom was the most disappointed and shocked and sighed:"Of all the places why must they play go here! We can't retrieve my stuff."

Guo Pianxian said:"Let us leave!"

Silver Blossom said with surprise:"Leave?"

Guo Pianxian whispered:"We don't know when they're finished, and when they're done they won't leave immediately. We can't stay here the entire time."

Yu Peiyu said:"We won't leave." He was determined to find out whether this Tang Wushuang was real or a fake.

Silver Blossom added:"Right, we should stay here and wait."

Guo Pianxian said:"They can see us in the morning."

Silver Blossom retorted:"Not if we stayed in a room."

She gently moved to the window of this house and found out the window wasn't closed. She pushed it open and entered, Yu Peiyu felt trespassing was not the right thing to do. But there was no other alternative. It was pitch dark inside, Silver Blossom took out her flint and lit one of her candles. She assumed the residents of his house were asleep but when the light was lit. Four eyes were looking at her, she was startled and almost dropped the candle.

The house looked clean and there was a large bed, in the bed was a sick looking man.

And sitting next to a bed a young girl who looked about 12, 13 years old. She kept looking at these trespassers with her bright and pretty eyes.

Silver Blossom asked:"Why aren't you sleeping yet? It is quite late now."

The girl just hemmed.

Silver Blossom asked:"Why won't you light the candles?"

The girl just shook her head, the sick man smiled:"We don't have any candles."

Silver Blossom said:"No candles?"

The sick man sighed:"My life is hanging on a silk thread, why should I need light. I rather await death in the dark, that way I will feel more assured." He sounded very weak and he really did sound like he was going to pass away at any time."

Silver Blossom said:"Aren't you afraid? I mean a bunch of strangers coming into your home."

The sick man smiled:"I'm a dying man why should I fear anything else anymore."

Silver Blossom said:"You're right! There are many advantages of being a dying man. For instance I was going to kill you but now I don't have to anymore."

She put her hand the girl's head and asked:"Aren't you afraid?"

The girl thought for awhile and answered:"If my third uncle dies, I don't want to live anymore either."

Silver Blossom said:"You're not afraid either."

The girl said resolutely:"No."

Silver Blossom laughed:"If you're not afraid, I suppose you won't scream and so?"

The girl said:"My third uncle likes peace, I never speak loudly."

Silver Blossom praised:"Marvellous! That way you will live longer too."

She now ignored the two, and was observing the family Li inn.

She could hear that Yu Fanghe and Tang Wushuang were still playing go.

Yu Peiyu asked gently:"Little Miss, what's your name?"

The girl said:"There is no need exchanging names. We have just met and will probably never see each other again. No need for formalities."

Yu Peiyu was surprised that she would say such wise words, and looked at her. The girl looked at him too for some time and said:"But since you asked I might as well tell you. My name is Zhu Lei'Er (Lei as in tears). I often cried when I was a little girl so hence this name."

Yu Peiyu wanted to say something but Zhu Lei'Er continued:"But now I don't cry anymore. Maybe I have run out of tears."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"How long has your uncle been ill?"

Zhu Lei'Er said:"For about 7 years now."

Yu Peiyu said:"Have you been taking care of him all that time?"

Zhu Lei'Er nodded, Yu Peiyu asked:"Isn't there someone else to help you out?"

Zhu Lei'Er said:"My third uncle only has me as his only relative."

Yu Peiyu sighed and thought:Seven years ago this girl was about 8 years old or so. She had to spend her childhood taking care of her sick uncle. Yu Peiyu felt sad for her.

A new day dawned, Zhong Jing slept in the arms of Guo Pianxian. Guo was looking at the sick man and was looking pensive.

Silver Blossom stretched herself and said:"The two are still playing go, when will they finish the game. At this rate they won't be finished until next year."

She turned to Zhu Lei'Er and said:"Be a good girl and prepare some congee and some dishes for aunts and uncles."

Zhu Lei'Er said:"No, I won't leave third uncle."

Silver Blossom smiled:"Be a good girl and listen! As a child you have to listen to grown-ups."

Zhu Lei'Er said:"No, I won't go."

Silver Blossom said very gently:"You are not afraid of me, are you? That's why you won't listen to me, right?"

After saying this she slapped Zhu Lei'Er very hard, leaving a imprint on her sweet little face.

But she still didn't move, Silver Blossom smiled:"What? Didn't I slap you hard enough?"

She raised her hand and was about to slap her again but this time Yu Peiyu grabbed her hand.

Silver Blossom sighed:"I knew you would interfere."

Yu Peiyu said coldly:"If you want me to stay on your side, you would be....."

Zhu Lei'Er yelled:"Ouch! You slapped me very hard."

Silver Blossom said:"Now, you're feeling pain?"

Zhu Lei'Er rubbed her cheek and said:"It hurts."

Silver Blossom looked at her and forgot about breakfast. She thought:Now she feels the pain, is there something wrong with this girl?

The sick man sighed:"You should have listened to her, if you did you wouldn't get slapped. Go downstairs and prepare

breakfast."

Zhu Lei' Er said:"It is because my third uncle told me. I wouldn't cook for you even if you threatened to kill me."

Yu Peiyu watched her as she went downstairs and sighed.

Silver Blossom smiled:"She reminds me of when I was a little girl. But if she is like me the breakfast will be very lethal. I'll check on her now."

Yu Peiyu frowned:"She's just a young girl."

Silver Blossom laughed:"When I was her age, I had already poisoned at least 70, 80 people."

Yu Peiyu said coldly:"She is not afraid of you, but you seem to be a bit afraid of her."

Silver Blossom couldn't explain her worries about that girl. Somehow she felt uncomfortable around her.

She was silent for a moment and smiled:"Anyway it never hurts to be extra careful."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I'll go instead of you."

Yu Peiyu saw Zhu Lei' Er in the kitchen she was washing the rice and was preparing breakfast. He felt very sad for that she had to endure so many hardships at her young age. Yu Peiyu said in a gentle voice:"Do you keep the entire house tidy and clean every day?"

Zhu Lei' Er said:"I can't stand dirt, if I see something disgusting I will hate it. But who wants to hang around disgusting people if they had a choice. Do you agree?"

Yu Peiyu said:"You're right." But Zhu Lei' Er words were hinting towards his present situation.

Zhu Lei' Er said softly:"But why are you in the company of disgusting people?"

Yu Peiyu didn't know what to say, this strange young girl was a very wise and knowledgeable person.

Zhu Lei' Er said:"Although I don't go out often but I see a lot of strange things happening. I always tell my uncle what I see, that way he won't feel lonely."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Do a lot of strange events happen here?"

Zhu Lei' Er said:"For example I saw a pretty young woman using a strange method killing four vicious robbers some time ago"

Yu Peiyu said:"You must be talking about the woman who slapped you."

Zhu Lei' Er said:"Did someone slap me? I have forgotten that. If you're hit and you cannot take revenge. The best way is to forget, so you won't feel bad about that."

Yu Peiyu said:"But what about feeling pain?"

Zhu Lei' Er said:"If you're hit you're bound to feel pain. I believe feeling pain later is better than feeling pain right away. Because that way you can take away the joy your attacker has."

Yu Peiyu was stunned that a young girl like her had so many strange thoughts and ideas.

Suddenly there was a loud noise coming from next door, Yu Peiyu said:"Let's see what is going on?"

Yu Peiyu saw a lot of Wulin people entering the family Li inn.

Silver Blossom said:"What do these people want here?"

Guo Pianxian said:"Everyone wants to see the chancellor of Wulin playing go with the leader of the Tang Clan. If word gets out everyone will rush over here within three days."

Silver Blossom said angrily:"Who is the son of a who spread the word."

No one answered her of course.

Yu Peiyu knew of course that Yu Fanghe must have spread the word himself. He wants to assure the Tang disciples that their beloved father, teacher is alright and is playing go

near their own mansion. This way the fake Tang Wushuang will easily become the real Tang Wushuang. They could hear some Wulin people say:"This is the new chancellor of Wulin. He looks very impressive and distinguished. No wonder that even Hong Lianhua praises him."

Some other people were asking:"Could we ask chancellor Yu to speak to us?"

Lin Shoujuan said:"Well, this is an interesting game they're playing. By the looks of it they will be busy for another few days. But after the game chancellor Yu is too happy to be able to talk to you, if you have any problems he will be happy to be of any assistance."

The people were cheering and felt that Yu Fanghe was a true gentleman.

The talking went on:"That is Mr. Lin Shoujuan, the Flowered Chestnut Sword. His daughter is a famous beauty in Wulin."

"Right, wasn't she supposed to marry young master Yu. The son of the chancellor."

"Yes, that was the idea. But Yu Peiyu died at Murder Manor."

"Didn't chancellor Yu want to take revenge?"

"It seems that Yu Peiyu was very strange and bizarre. Chancellor Yu was very disappointed in him. Perhaps it is a good thing that he's dead. That way Miss Lin doesn't have to marry a madman."

Yu Peiyu was angry and sad, but he couldn't do anything.

Silver Blossom said:"When will these people leave? How long do we have to wait here?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Not long anymore." He got up and started to walk downstairs. Yu Peiyu said calmly:"No need to hide and wait anymore. I think it is time to be a bit more daring and open."

Silver Blossom laughed:"What are you talking about?"

Before she knew what happened, Yu Peiyu was downstairs and opened the door. He walked to the family Li inn.

Zhong Jing was filled with amazement:"What a bold move."

Guo Pianxian smiled:"With a friend like me he is bound to be brave."

Silver Blossom said in a melancholic tone:"Before he had you as his friend he was a very brave and courageous man."

When Yu Peiyu entered the inn everyone looked at him in awe, they had never seen such a handsome young man before.

Yu Peiyu just put up a smile and walked straight ahead, Lin Shoujuan approached him and said:"May I help you? The chancellor is...."

Yu Peiyu interrupted him:"My name is Yu Peiyu."

When everyone heard the name Yu Peiyu they were all shocked. Lin Shoujuan looked pale and Yu Fanghe and Tang Wushuang looked up. They both gave Yu Peiyu a good look.

Yu Peiyu was certain now that Yu Fanghe didn't recognize him and this Tang Wushuang was a fake too.

This Yu Fanghe smiled:"Yu Peiyu? It's surprising that you have the same name like my late son."

Yu Peiyu looked at Tang Wushuang and Yu Fanghe and his heart was practically bleeding but smiled:"That is a coincidence and I feel honoured."

Yu Fanghe asked with a smile:"What can I do for you, young master Yu?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I came here to retrieve something."

Yu Fanghe stroked his beard and smiled:"What is here that belongs to young master Yu?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Some time ago when I lodged here I accidentally left a parcel here."

Yu Fanghe thought it was quite funny and said:" A lot of people come in and out in an inn, I do hope your belongings are still here."

Yu Peiyu said:" With your permission chancellor Yu, I would like to...."

Yu Fanghe smiled:" If it still here, of course you can retrieve it."

Yu Peiyu smiled:" Thank you, chancellor Yu. Sorry for the inconvenience."

Suddenly it seemed like Yu Peiyu's body shot up, without bending his knees or anything. He flew up the beam and took the parcel. This style of the art of levitation was called The Heavenly Meteoric Rise, the form of this art is studied by numerous people in Wulin. The disciples of Shaolin, Wudang, Diancang all knew it.

Yu Peiyu used this not to show off his martial arts but to conceal his martial arts school, just in case.

Yu Fanghe praised:" Excellent!"

When everyone heard that the chancellor was praising they too called out.

Only Silver Blossom was not paying attention to this, she had her eyes fixed whether her parcel was still there. Suddenly she was very happy, she saw that Yu Peiyu had retrieved the parcel.

Guo Pianxian smiled:" Your parcel is there."

Silver Blossom laughed:" I knew nobody would find it."

Guo Pianxian smiled and praised:" This Yu Peiyu is really something. He has courage and intelligence, now he has retrieved the parcel in public no one including Yu Fanghe can take it away now."

Silver Blossom said:" Right, he's coming back now. Damn!"

Guo Pianxian asked:" What's the matter? Is Yu Fanghe giving him trouble?"

Silver Blossom cursed:"That sly old devil wouldn't dream of giving him trouble. But he would like to take this opportunity to befriend himself with Yu Peiyu, he is requesting him to stay here and join him."

Guo Pianxian asked:"What is Yu Peiyu doing now?"

Silver Blossom said:"He looks very calm and is still smiling..... He is saying that he will come back when they've finished their game of go."

Guo Pianxian was surprised and said:"You can hear him talk?"

Silver Blossom said:"No, of course not. But I can read his lips and deduct the rest what I cannot see clearly."

Guo Pianxian praised:"You're also a woman with many hidden talents."

Silver Blossom said:"Damn! The old goat used his sleeve to brush away the go pieces. And he said he would rather talk to a new young hero like Yu Peiyu than play go."

Guo Pianxian frowned:"This way Yu Peiyu has to stay."

Silver Blossom was a bit panicky and said:"He cannot stay there, and he can't offend Yu Fanghe at this moment. He looks a bit troubled."

Suddenly a loud clear voice said:"It would be a shame to stop such a marvellous game of go. I think this game would go into the analects of Wulin, if chancellor Yu stopped now we would all be very disappointed."

Guo Pianxian quickly asked:"Who is that?"

Silver Blossom looked pleased and said:"This man has put the go pieces back on the board and on the right places too. He is very smart....."

Guo Pianxian walked to the window and looked out too, he saw a young handsome beggar. This was of course the famous leader of the Beggars Association Hong Lianhua.

They could hear Yu Fanghe laughing:"I never thought master Hong Lian had such an interest in go, you leave no choice but to continue my game."

Guo Pianxian quickly moved away from the window and broke out in a cold sweat. Silver Blossom laughed:"Why are you that afraid of him?"

Guo Pianxian sat down and didn't answer.

Silver Blossom said softly to herself:"That is strange.....If Hong Lianhua and Yu Peiyu are friends why did he allow Lin Daiyu to injure Yu Peiyu. Why did he just help Yu Peiyu?"

The door downstairs opened and Yu Peiyu walked up the stairs, when Guo Pianxian saw that he was alone he felt relieved.

He asked:"Did Hong Lianhua see you enter this place?"

Yu Peiyu was surprised and said:"Why would he pay attention to me?"

Guo Pianxian asked:"Doesn't he know you?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"How would I know him." He felt quite sad not to be able to acknowledge his good friend, and had to quietly sneak away. But at least he knew that this Tang Wushuang was an imposter too, he was hoping that the real Tang Wushuang was still alive.

Silver Blossom took her parcel from Yu Peiyu and said:"We should leave this place at once. We got what we came for."

Guo Pianxian said:"We can't leave if Hong Lianhua is still around."

Silver Blossom smiled:"You're afraid but I'm not."

Guo Pianxian said resolutely:"You won't leave either."

Silver Blossom smiled very sweetly:"Of course if you're still here, I don't want to go either."

She kept her hands tightly to her parcel, she was afraid to lose it again.

Guo Pianxian said coldly:"You can leave if you want to and take your treasure with you."

Silver Blossom was stunned and said:"What?"

Guo Pianxian said coldly:"Open it and you'll understand."

Silver Blossom smiled:"I know what is inside, I don't need to look at it."

But still she was a bit suspicious after hearing Guo Pianxian's words, she opened the parcel and called out:"NO!"

There were only roof tiles in her parcel. She almost fainted with anger and Yu Peiyu was surprised too.

Guo Pianxian was smiling coldly.

Silver Blossom asked:"How did you know?"

Guo Pianxian said:"When brother Yu walked up the stairs I knew already that that parcel didn't contain any valuables. The sound of the steps reveal a lot, my ears and eyes are not as useless as your ears and eyes."

Silver Blossom angrily said:"Who took my stuff? That day only I knew where I put the parcel away."

After some time she said:"Could it be Yu Fanghe?Yes, of course before the sly dog lodged he must have instructed his men to search the inn."

Yu Peiyu said:"If it is in his possession, there is no way you can get it back."

Guo Pianxian only had his eyes on the sick man, and didn't speak anymore. Silver Blossom now looked into the same direction.

She suddenly saw that the sick man had something hidden under his blankets.

Silver Blossom laughed:"There is really something wrong with my eyes."

She walked to the bed of the sick man, Yu Peiyu frowned:"What are you doing?"

Silver Blossom smiled:"There is something good under the blankets I just want to have a look."

She wanted to pull away the blankets, the sick man opened his eyes and said:"I can assure you if you pull away the blankets you will suffer a terrible death."

All of a sudden the sick old man had a heroic, majestic grandeur.

Silver Blossom didn't dare to pull the blankets and stepped away from his bed.

The sick man closed his eyes again, Silver Blossom said with a smile:"I really can't remove your blankets."

She regained her confidence again.

The sick man said:"No."

Silver Blossom smiled:"If you tell me that I can't do something, I will do it anyway just for fun."

The sick man sighed:"Alright! Lei'Er show her."

Zhu Lei'Er who was still downstairs immediately walked up and looked at Silver Blossom.

She asked:"You really want to have a look? You won't regret your decision?"

Silver Blossom said:"No I won't regret it. And yes I want to have a look. I just want to see what kinds of demons or goblins you have been hiding."

Although she was giggling like usual but she was still a bit nervous. Somehow she was afraid of this young girl and this sick old man, she couldn't explain why she had this fear for them.

Zhu Lei'Er went downstairs took a big bucket of water and took out a little box. She took a bit of powder out of the little box and threw it into the water. The water turned black instantly.

Silver Blossom had no idea what she was doing and was quite curious.

Zhu Lei' Er put the bucket in a corner and smiled to Silver Blossom: "Just watch."

There was something mysterious about her smile, even Yu Peiyu was a bit anxious and curious. Silver Blossom stared at the bucket with fascination.

Suddenly the blankets were moving, and it kept moving harder and harder.

The entire room was filled with fear, Zhong Jing held Guo Pianxian's hand tightly.

Silver Blossom stuttered: "I....I...don't want....to know....what's under the blankets anymore.."

Zhu Lei' Er said calmly: "It is too late, you must and shall watch."

Suddenly a centipede crawled out of the blankets, it was not a very big centipede but it was entirely red. It was so red actually seemed it was glowing.

After that centipede another 20, 30 centipedes crawled out with different shapes and different bright colours. Needless to say these creepy crawlers were very venomous.

Silver Blossom giggled: "I thought it was something scary, I played with centipedes like these when I was three years old."

This wasn't a lie, disciples of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect weren't afraid of centipedes.

But still she was still a bit afraid, and the other centipedes followed the red one like it was their captain.

Suddenly 20, 30 scorpions came out and followed the centipedes too, and after the scorpions a large number of snakes, toads, etc. came out of the blankets. Some of these creatures were so rare that even Silver Blossom had never seen before.

But all of these creatures just slowly marched to the bucket of black water.

Silver Blossom couldn't laugh anymore, and Zhong Jing shrieked and passed out again.

Nobody would have guessed that the bedridden man had so many venomous creatures under his blankets. How could he sleep there peacefully.

Even Silver Blossom got goosebumps, she played with poisonous creatures ever since she was a little child. But sleeping with hundreds, thousands of venomous critters like this, she didn't have the courage to do that.

Zhu Lei' Er put two pairs of chopsticks against the bucket and the all these animals used the chopsticks as a bridge.

The first centipede fell into the black water and twirled in the bucket and crawled out the other side, looking very weak and feeble. Now this way every strange critter did the same thing and crawled out again and went straight back to the blankets.

The water slowly began to change from black to white and it was emitting smoke.

Guo Pianxian was sweating, and when the last snake returned under the blankets everyone was silent and stunned.

Zhu Lei' Er took a bowl of that white water and giggled: "The congee isn't ready yet, care for a bowl of water. I put extra ingredients in it, it tastes better than chicken soup."

Silver Blossom paced backwards very quickly and shook her hands and said: "No, thank you. I will pass."

She now knew that the powder she put must be some sort of antidote or even another strong poison to balance out the poison of those creatures. She also knew that the bucket water was very dangerous, even the mere smell or touch could kill. Let alone drink it.

Zhu Lei' Er smiled: "Since nobody wants to drink it, I will have to drink it alone. Such a waste that nobody wants to try such a delicacy."

She drank the bowl of water with with no hesitation, everyone was thinking what is her stomach made of? Iron, diamond?

After she finished that bowl she said calmly:"My third uncle has been ill for many years, he uses the cold venom of these pets to prolong his life. Please forgive us for being rude."

Silver Blossom smiled:"What has your uncle contracted? What is the name of this strange illness?"

Zhu Lei' Er said:"There is no name for this disease."

Suddenly a voice from outside was calling:"Young master Yu, our leader master Hong Lian would like to speak to you."

Yu Peiyu recognized the voice it was Mei Simang, an elder of the Beggars Association. Yu Peiyu was very happy, and wondered why Hong Lianhua wanted to talk to him about.

Guo Pianxian said:"You go downstairs to delay them from coming here. I'm off."

All of a sudden a voice of woman said:"Young master Yu, please open the door. Madame Hai Tang wishes to speak to you."

Madame Hai Tang was here too, Guo Pianxian rushed to the window and looked out through a crack and saw a group of men and women surrounding this house.

Several voices said:"Master Hong Lian and Madame Hai Tang both wish to speak to young master Yu, please open the door."

Guo Pianxian pulled Yu Peiyu's arm and asked:"Do they know that I am here?"

Yu Peiyu said with a slight indignation:"How should I know?"

Guo Pianxian asked:"What do they want from you?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Again how would I know?"

Guo Pianxian said:"They have surrounded us, these people have some issues with us. You and I have joined forces you you cannot open the door."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"If I don't open the door, they can storm inside too."

Some girls were saying:"Young master Yu, we have been polite up till now. But if you don't open the door we will have to use force."

Silver Blossom smiled and said loudly:"Young master Yu is in the lavatory doing his business...You cannot storm the lavatory as well. You can come back when he's done, why the rush?"

The girls downstairs giggled:"Very well! We will come back after a short while."

Yu Peiyu turned to Guo Pianxian and asked:"You don't even want to face Madame Hai Tang. What happened between you?"

Guo Pianxian was coughing now and Zhong Jing who woke up now looked very worried.

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Anyhow, they will come back very soon. We have to do something."

The bedridden man opened his eyes and said:"I have a plan."

Guo Pianxian was very happy and asked:"You have a plan, sir?"

The bedridden man said:"Come closer and I will tell you."

Guo Pianxian walked closer but suddenly backed away again, he too was afraid of this strange bedridden old man.

Zhong Jing rushed to his help and stood in front of him and said:"Sir, if you have a plan to save him you can tell me. We will be most grateful for your help."

The man frowned and asked:"Who are you? And to what school do you belong?"

Zhong Jing was hesitant for a minute but said in the end:"I'm Zhong Jing of Huashan."

The bedridden man said softly:"Huashan an orthodox school.....come closer and I will tell you."

Although Zhong Jing was afraid of those creatures but for the man she loved she had to be brave.

The bedridden man asked:"How long have you learnt martial arts?"

Zhong Jing replied:"About 11 years." She was surprised why he would ask a question like that.

The man smiled:"Good...good...."

He suddenly grabbed her hand with incredible speed, even experts like Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu were surprised.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Sir, what do you want?"

The man closed his eyes and held on to the hand of Zhong Jing and didn't do anything else.

Zhong Jing couldn't break free from his powerful grip but stayed as calm as she could.

She asked:"Sir, what is it you want from me?"

The man still had his eyes closed and said:"Don't open the door."

Zhong Jing said:"That is your plan?"

The man said calmly:"You don't have to open the door, because no one in the realm dares to set foot in this house."

Zhong Jing felt that this man was too arrogant but believed a bit of his words. This man was filled with mystery.

But she didn't know her face was slowly becoming very pale, and the man regained some colour in his face.

No one saw the change in their faces and the people downstairs were requesting an audience again.

Mei Simang said:"Chancellor Yu and old Mr. Tang would like to see you too. Won't you come out?"

Yu Peiyu wanted to go down but wasn't sure anymore at this point.

The girl who spoke earlier:"We have no ill intentions, we just like to speak to you. There are so many people who wishes to talk to you why refuse to see anyone?"

These people weren't here for Guo Pianxian that was obvious now, but they were not willing to break down the door either. But they seemed very anxious to speak to Yu Peiyu. That made Yu Peiyu suspicious again.

Suddenly there was a soft scream and they saw Zhong Jing fall down.

Guo Pianxian picked her up and asked:"What happened?"

She was very weak and looked very pale and couldn't move.

Zhong Jing stuttered:".....He....he...is...is...a mon....monster.." She couldn't say anything else anymore.

The bedridden man looked very healthy and strong again but still had his eyes closed. Guo Pianxian understood now, he somehow managed to absorb Zhong Jing's internal strength.

Zhu Lei'Er was standing by her uncle now, Silver Blossom walked towards Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu and asked:"What happened?"

Guo Pianxian said with fear:"This is the evil skill that absorbs the martial arts of others and use it for themselves. I never thought that this type of skill existed. We should kill him now before all of us will die here."

Silver Blossom sighed:"If you would attack first I'll certainly help you."

Guo Pianxian stood there and didn't move, Yu Peiyu who wanted to move heard a voice now.

It was Yu Fanghe:"They are not willing to come down, they must be in cahoots with them. Let us attack now before it is too late....."

Madame Hai Tang asked:"Chancellor Yu, are you sure about this?"

Yu Fanghe said:"We have seen the evidence and heard the witnesses. Master Hong Lian, do you agree?"

Hong Lianhua didn't speak, in other words he agreed too.

Yu Peiyu was still confused about what they are talking about when suddenly 10 iron balls as big as watermelons flew into the house. There was smoke and sparks emitting from them.

Yu Peiyu, Guo Pianxian and Silver Blossom didn't know what those were and didn't know how to counter them. They quickly moved aside.

The bedridden man raised his hand and snapped his fingers ten times, they heard a whoosing sound and the ten iron balls flew out the same way they came in.

Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu now understood that this man generated his energy to shoot invisible energy blasts.

It was unbelievable that he was able to shoot ten blasts, even the famous Divine Finger Snap was not this impressive.

They have heard of this level before, and never thought they would have the chance to see this level of the energy forming a sword.

Suddenly there were ten large bangs, even the house shook and they saw sparks of fire everywhere.

Chapter 17 - Comings and Goings

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I'm not blaming you, but I know that they are people on this world who are more dangerous and ruthless than you. You kill people because they have offended you in some way, but some....."

He didn't finish his words and knocked on the door, a voice said:"The door isn't locked, you can come in."

Silver Blossom asked:"Were those the secretive weaponry of the Thunderbolt Clan?"

Guo Pianxian nodded and said:"If those things exploded inside all of us would be dead right now."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled:"Now you understand why my third uncle borrowed Miss Zhong's internal strength. She lost her 11 years worth of internal strength but my uncle saved your lives too."

Although the windows were broken, Zhu Lei'Er closed the curtains she didn't want the people outside gawking at them.

The bedridden man put his hand under the blankets again, and he looked pale and weak now. If they didn't see it they wouldn't believe this man was capable of shooting invisible energy blasts with his fingers.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Sir, what kind of unsolved issues do you have with Yu Fanghe?"

The man replied:"He is not fit to be my adversary."

Yu Peiyu asked:"But why does he want to kill you, sir?"

The man said:"How do you know that they aren't here for you?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Of all the places in the world why does Yu Fanghe had to play go in these little town and in this inn. I thought that was strange, but now I know he came here to deal with you, sir."

The man closed his eyes and ignored him.

Yu Peiyu said:"Furthermore it is strange that you would choose this place to nurse your wounds. I do not know what is special about this place."

The man still remained silent.

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly said:"They are not here for third uncle, they are here to deal with me."

Yu Peiyu said with surprise:"You? But you're just a young girl?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled:"Do you really think I'm very young? I'm a bit older than you think."

Yu Peiyu said:"Even if this Yu Fanghe is a monster, he is still the chancellor of Wulin. He wouldn't call up so many martial artists to deal with a young girl."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed:"Some chancellor of Wulin. My third uncle and I don't even think he is worthy of our attention."

The chancellor of Wulin is a prestigious post, practically everyone in the realm of martial arts had to respect and acknowledge the status of Yu Fanghe. Could it be that this young girl had a even higher status than him?

All of a sudden Silver Blossom screamed:"They are gone. They have all left."

Guo Pianxian looked out too and said:"Yes, you're right. They're gone."

Zhu Lei'Er said casually:"They think my third uncle has regained his martial arts, they don't want to die here."

Yu Fanghe, Madame Hai Tang and other martial arts experts were afraid of this bedridden man. Who is this man anyway?

Guo Pianxian picked up Zhong Jing and said:"We should go too."

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly:"You should go before it is too late."

Yu Peiyu said:"But if they come back....."

Zhu Lei' Er said loudly:"My third uncle doesn't need your help. As for me....I don't care about being alive or dead anymore."

Zhong Jing said weakly:"But why did you steal my martial arts?"

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly:"You came begging to us, don't come crying to us the next time."

Zhong Jing started to cry again.

The bedridden man said:"Return their belongings."

Zhu Lei' Er said:"Those are mine, why should I give them back."

The man said:"What use do we have for those things? If some people consider them a treasure let them keep it."

Zhu Lei' Er walked to a closet and took out a large parcel, she threw it in front of Silver Blossom. Silver Blossom saw it was her beloved treasure and quickly picked it up and walked downstairs.

Yu Peiyu kept thinking who are these people? What do they want in this small town? Why were Yu Fanghe and all those other people that afraid of this sickly old man?

The four of them walked out of the house, Silver Blossom was extremely happy. All the houses and shops had their doors shut tightly and no one was walking outside.

Suddenly Guo Pianxian blocked her way, she quickly held on to her parcel tightly and asked:"What do you want?"

Guo Pianxian sighed:"Women! I don't want your parcel."

Silver Blossom smiled:"What is it that you want?"

Guo Pianxian said coldly:"I just want to leave this place as soon as possible. I don't want to be carried away here."

Silver Blossom giggled:"I'm afraid your hands are full, but if you want to carry me I don't mind."

Guo Pianxian said coldly:"If you keep going this way all of us will be carried away. Like corpses."

Silver Blossom asked:"What do you mean? Can't we leave this place?"

Guo Pianxian said:"We can't leave this town at this moment."

Silver Blossom said:"I too know that Yu Fanghe and others are still around here, in fact they must have surrounded the town."

Guo Pianxian said:"You must think that they won't harm us because they are not planning to deal with us."

Silver Blossom said:"What do they gain by stopping us? Furthermore you two will certainly not leave me behind."

Guo Pianxian laughed.

Silver Blossom smiled too, Guo Pianxian said:"If you want to go, I won't stop you. Let me remind you, you won't go far with that big parcel."

Silver Blossom didn't walk anymore and looked disappointed.

Guo Pianxian said:"If you want to leave, you'll have to leave your parcel behind. But I know you treasure that parcel as much as your life."

Silver Blossom angrily said:"Now I know why the old goat returned the parcel to me. They don't want us to go."

Yu Peiyu said:"Now you know his intentions why don't you return the parcel to them."

She said:"He knows I won't part with my treasure. Furthermore without the treasure I won't bear to part with

young master Yu and Mr. Guo."

Silver Blossom asked Guo Pianxian:" Shall we go back?"

Guo Pianxian answered:"We're lucky that all of us are still alive. Going back? You must be joking."

Guo Pianxian now would rather take his chances with Hong Lianhua than facing that sick old man and that strange young girl.

Silver Blossom said:"Now what? We can't leave this place but also we don't want to go back to that eerie house. Should we find another empty house here? I hope this time we won't find any strange sick old men or some strange young girl."

Guo Pianxian smiled:"This time I will find us a new hideout. A hideout no one will guess. We're going to the inn."

Silver Blossom smiled:"Very clever! They won't go back to the inn again and it must be the safest place in this entire town."

She looked at Yu Peiyu and said:"Well young master Yu are going to join us?"

Guo Pianxian said:"I know he will join us."

Silver Blossom said:"How come?"

Guo Pianxian explained:"Yu Fanghe will come back sooner or later and we can watch two parties fight each other. We will only gain advantages. And brother Yu is full of questions at this moment, brother Yu wants to get to the bottom of this, right?"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Also there is nowhere else I can go now."

When they entered the inn, the waiters and proprietor were gone, they must have been scared away.

Guo Pianxian went to the kitchen and saw that they were still things cooking on a fire.

Silver Blossom said:" A lot of people died in this inn, it is not surprising that the waiters, cooks and proprietor ran off." She put her parcel between the firewood and used hay to cover it up.

She took a bowl and filled it with congee, Guo Pianxian did the same and gave a bowl to Zhong Jing. He said:" Eat some."

Zhong Jing said:"I don't like congee."

She hit the bowl out of his hands and started to cry again, and wept:" I've lost all my martial arts, I'm no different from an invalid. You will leave me sooner or later I might as well die."

Guo Pianxian softly consoled her:"I don't need your martial arts to protect me, it doesn't matter that you lost your martial arts."

Suddenly they heard a noise, Guo Pianxian looked out of the kitchen window and saw two men cautiously walking towards the house of Zhu Lei' Er.

Guo Pianxian saw that both men had rather good martial arts, they were sent here to investigate and to spy on the sick old man and Zhu Lei' Er.

Guo Pianxian opened the kitchen door and smiled:"Why won't you come in?" He quickly went inside again.

The two men looked dazzled, Guo Pianxian wanted to lure them inside and question them about Yu Fanghe's motives.

But the two men didn't come in, normally seeing such a situation the two men would immediately come in and investigate but now.....

Silver Blossom was also surprised and said:"That's strange. Are they afraid of us?"

Guo Pianxian said:"One of those men is a Diancang disciple. His name is Guo Chong, The Red Cherry Blossom And The

Green Willow Sword, he is a rather famous Diancang expert....."

Silver Blossom smiled:"I think he's a just coward and what a long nickname?"

Guo Pianxian was also surprised and he leant forward to look outside and he saw that Zhu Lei'Er came down and was plucking flowers.

Both men looked at Zhu Lei'Er completely captivated by her, and forgot everything else.

Guo Pianxian was surprised, although Zhu Lei'Er was a beautiful young girl she was still very young. How could she mesmerize two 30, 40 year old men.

Suddenly Zhu Lei'Er got up and walked back to the house slowly, her movements were most graceful and elegant. She suddenly turned around and smiled in the direction of Guo Pianxian.

Guo Pianxian suddenly forgot her age, forgot everything else and wanted to go to her too.

Fortunately his internal power was quite powerful and couldn't regain himself, he saw that those two men already followed Zhu Lei'Er into the house.

Silver Blossom said softly:"She is good! She is a little enchantress she is able to seduce two men that easily. At her age I could only follow men."

She turned to Guo Pianxian and smiled:"Fortunately our Mr. Guo has good internal strength, otherwise you would be number three."

Guo Pianxian coldly said:"It isn't because I have good internal energy but because I have seen many types of women in my life."

Silver Blossom said:"What does she want with those men?" All of a sudden she understood and said:"Of course she is luring them to the old sick man, their internal energies are

soon to be absorbed by him."

Guo Pianxian nodded.

Silver Blossom laughed:"The poor fools!"

Guo Pianxian turned to Yu Peiyu and said:"That's why Yu Fanghe lead so many martial artists against them."

Yu Peiyu said with a wry smile:"She must have done this more than once."

Guo Pianxian said:"By the judge of it she must have done this numerous times."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Because of this incident Hong Lianhua had no choice but to comply to Yu Fanghe."

He doesn't know about the other martial arts experts but he does know that Hong Lianhua is very suspicious about this Yu Fanghe.

Guo Pianxian smiled:"It is hard to believe that an adolescent girl has such abilities, in my opinion Hong Lianhua may not be her match."

Silver Blossom laughed:"Anyhow I don't care how powerful she is, I still managed to slap her once."

She raised her hand and showed them how she hit her, suddenly she turned pale. It looked like she was slapped this time.

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian were shocked to see her like this, Silver Blossom was looking at her hand and was trembling.

They looked at her hand too and were stunned. This normally beautiful white hand was now red and green and looked like a claw of a strange beast.

Yu Peiyu quickly asked:"How do you feel?"

Silver Blossom said frantically:"I can't feel my hand anymore, why didn't I noticed this before. When did my hand change?"

Guo Pianxian asked:"Can you still move your hand?"

Silver Blossom stuttered with fear:"I....I....believe so.....but....but...."

Guo Pianxian picked up a rolling pin and used it to hit her hand, anyone who gets hit on the hand by a rolling pin will cry out. But Silver Blossom didn't feel a thing.

Guo Pianxian frowned:"Can you feel the pain?"

Silver Blossom said with fear:"No...no...there...is....no...pain....."

She sat down on the floor and started crying, Guo Pianxian picked up a butcher's knife and hacked at her poisoned hand. But there was no blood and her hand wasn't chopped off.

Her hand was as hard as a rock, she cried even harder.

Guo Pianxian smiled wryly:"My good Miss, that slap of yours has brought disaster on your head."

Silver Blossom cried:"But when I slapped her I didn't feel anything strange."

Guo Pianxian sighed:"That is the lethal part about it, the poison entered your body without notice. If you noticed it at that time there might be a way to save yourself."

Silver Blossom sobbed:"Is....is...it too la....late now?"

When it comes to poison her knowledge is a bit more profound than Guo Pianxian but she was in a frantic state and was hoping that it wasn't too late.

Guo Pianxian shook his head.

Silver Blossom begged:"I know you're an expert in using poison too, please help me!"

She ran towards Guo Pianxian, Guo quickly avoided her and said:"Yes, it is true that I'm an expert in using poison. But even I don't know what poison this is....Good Miss, it is too late for you don't drag us along with you. Please don't touch us, I suggest you go and find a peaceful place and wait for death."

Silver Blossom sat down again and looked sad and disappointed.

She was a broken woman, Yu Peiyu said:"Come with me!"

Silver Blossom said:"Where are you taking me?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Although none of us can give you an antidote but the person who poisoned you must have an antidote."

Silver Blossom said softly to herself:"Yes...yes.....I just slapped her, there are no animosities between us. She will save me." She was consoling herself.

Guo Pianxian said loudly:"Brother Yu, do you want to go back to them?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Yes."

Guo Pianxian said:"Those two are very mysterious and dangerous, we were lucky to escape from them once. This time you might not be so lucky."

Yu Peiyu smiled faintly:"If I had to die, I would have died at least ten times now."

Guo Pianxian frowned:"It is worth risking your life for a woman like her."

Yu Peiyu answered:"I would do the same thing for you, brother Guo."

Guo Pianxian shook his head:"I've never seen a man like him, I don't know whether he is....."

Suddenly Silver Blossom yelled loudly:"Hong Lianhua, Madame Hai Tang! Guo Pianxian is hiding in the inn. Come quickly, he is in the kitchen!"

Guo Pianxian cursed angrily:"The B-I-T-C-H-!"

He carried Zhong Jing and had no choice but to follow Yu Peiyu too, Zhong Jing sobbed:"Why are you still so concerned about me? I've lost my internal energy I have no martial arts anymore. Why are you still so caring towards me?"

Guo Pianxian said coldly:"If you would stop talking, I would be even nicer."

Yu Peiyu looked at Silver Blossom and shook his head, Silver Blossom noticed he was looking at her and smiled:"He gave up on me first, don't blame me."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I'm not blaming you, but I know that they are people on this world who are more dangerous and ruthless than you. You kill people because they have offended you in some way, but some....."

He didn't finish his words and knocked on the door, a voice said:"The door isn't locked, you can come in."

Silver Blossom gritted her teeth and said:"They knew we would come back."

She said it very softly but the people inside could still hear her and Zhu Lei'Er said:"I told you before we won't beg for your help, but some people will always come back crawling for help."

Silver Blossom thought she was standing behind the door but when she opened no one was there.

Zhu Lei'Er was upstairs and said:"Don't lock the door, someone might want to come in too."

Silver Blossom thought:The little witch has very good ears. This time she didn't dare to speak up her mind anymore.

She just followed Yu Peiyu upstairs, they saw that Zhu Lei'Er sat on a chair next to the bed. She ignored them, the two men earlier were kneeling in front of the bed and the bedridden man held on to their hands.

They were sweating and panting heavily and they looked very scared.

They begged:"Please sir! Spare us!"

The man regained a bit of colour in his cheeks and the begging became softer and softer.

Zhu Lei'Er calmly said:"You should feel lucky that my third uncle is just borrowing your martial arts. He doesn't want

your lives."

At this point the man released his grip and the two men fell down and almost fainted. Zhu Lei' Er took out her handkerchief and wiped the sweat from her uncle's face.

She asked:"How were their martial arts?"

The man shook his head and sighed:"Disappointing.....disappointing.....Why are there so many people in Wulin with lowly abilities nowadays?"

Zhu Lei' Er frowned and scolded the two men:"For crying out loud! Both of you are quite old why weren't you two a bit more diligent in learning martial arts? If you put a bit more effort in the past you wouldn't be as useless now."

Yu Peiyu was a bit bemused by this, she used these men so her uncle borrowed their internal strenght and now she is blaming them for being lazy in the past.

After Zhu Lei' Er scolded them she kicked them both out the window. Her legs moved very quickly and no one saw what stances she used. But they could hear that both men landed quite far away from the house.

Yu Peiyu did feel that those two men were not any good characters. If Zhu Lei' Er didn't know any martial arts she might have been.....

But seeing her kick those men away like this was a bit too much in his opinion.

Silver Blossom smiled:"Miss Zhu, please forgive me for being rude earlier."

Zhu Lei' Er coldly said:"It doesn't matter I grew up being slapped and bullied."

Silver Blossom could hear that she was still angry with herself so she knelt in front of the sick old man and begged:"Sir, please save my life. I, too am a poor orphan if you can save my life I will take care of you for the rest of my life."

She knew if the old man agreed to help her, Zhu Lei' Er must give her the antidote. And men usually cannot stand the tears of women.

The old man suddenly opened his eyes and asked: "Are you a disciple of the Palace of Enchantment?"

Both Silver Blossom and Yu Peiyu were shocked to hear this.

Silver Blossom asked: "Sir, how....."

She wanted to say how do you know because she did enter the Palace of Enchantment and did pay her respects to the portrait of the keeper. So she is a disciple of the Palace of Enchantment.

But she remembered that almost everyone in Wulin hated that woman so if she acknowledged that she was a disciple of the keeper, this old man would surely not help her.

The old man asked: "Well, are you or are you not?"

Silver Blossom said: "No, I'm not."

He looked at her for some time and sighed: "A pity, a pity."

Silver Blossom asked: "What is a pity?"

She was very afraid now and wondered what he was talking about.

After some time Zhu Lei' Er said: "After learning the skills of the Palace of Enchantment you're a disciple of that school. By denying it you have become a traitor to your own school, why should I help traitors?"

Silver Blossom was sweating and asked: "What are you talking about Miss Zhu?"

Zhu Lei' Er ignored her.

Silver Blossom looked at Zhu Lei' Er and looked at the sick old man.

Guo Pianxian who came up too sighed: "A pity."

Silver Blossom shouted: "What! What is a pity!"

Guo Pianxian said:"If you have said that you are a disciple of the Palace of Enchantment, Miss Zhu would have saved you."

Silver Blossom asked:"Why?"

Guo Pianxian smiled:"Haven't you guessed who Miss Zhu really is?"

Silver Blossom asked:"Who....who is she?"

Guo Pianxian bowed in front of Zhu Lei' Er and said:"Miss Zhu is the daughter of the keeper, Lady Zhu Mei. Lady Zhu is the keeper of the Palace of Enchantment."

Yu Peiyu called out with surprise and Silver Blossom got up and quickly knelt down again and asked:"Miss Zhu is really the daughter of Lady Zhu?"

Zhu Lei' Er had no emotions on her face at the moment she was not an adolescent girl anymore now looked like a powerful woman.

Silver Blossom was feeling cold over her entire body but suddenly she yelled:"Impossible! Lady Zhu died 30, 40 years ago. She can't have a daughter that young."

Guo Pianxian sighed:"There are many secrets in the realm of martial arts."

Silver Blossom asked:"What do you know?"

Guo Pianxian said:"I just know a little bit, but I wouldn't dare to say it now."

The old man said:"Speak up if you know something."

Guo Pianxian said with respect:"As you command, sir."

Both Yu Peiyu and Silver Blossom were very much interested and curious now. They both listened with undivided attention.

Guo Pianxian began:"In the history of Wulin there are three big mysteries, one of them is the death of Lady Zhu, the keeper of the Palace of Enchantment."

The old man nodded:"True."

Guo Pianxian continued:"A lot of people were under the impression that Lady Zhu died 30 years ago and her palace was deserted. But some people said that she didn't die but just left to flee from her enemies."

Yu Peiyu said:"But I saw her body."

Guo Xiantian said:"According to some she didn't die and used one of her pupils to pose as her. Lady Zhu was very careful and no one knew of her whereabouts. But somehow news of her spread out and the first man who found out about her being alive was Lord Dongfang."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Lord Dongfang? Do you mean Dongfang Daming? Wasn't he the lord of the Sun And Moon Isle and the ruler of The Nocturne City? I've heard that his pair of Sun and Moon Wheels are unmatched in the entire Southern Sea regions."

Guo Pianxian smiled:"You can call out his name now, but 20 years ago if someone would openly call out his name that person would not live to see another day."

The sick old man asked sternly:"You have heard of Dongfang Daming too?"

He looked very impressive and majestic now even Yu Peiyu felt a bit afraid but he didn't show it. He answered:"My late father told me, that lord Dongfang was one of The Ten Great Martial Arts Masters of Wulin. Because he lived far away from the central plains the martial artists in the central plains often didn't know about his skills. But all the Ten Great Martial Arts Masters are superb experts, it is said that they are even better than the 13 leaders of the orthodox schools."

The old man asked:"Name a few of those ten masters?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I can't remember all of them I do remember lord Dongfang, the Celestial Nun of Fenglai Isle Yinghua Shi-Tai, in the northern provinces you have the Flying

Hunchback, Yi Kun. There is also master Nu who retreated to Mount Qingcheng in Sichuan province, the Divine Dragon Swordsman and the Heavenly King Li who lived on the Celestial Wind Cliffs....."

Before Yu Peiyu could finish, the old man interrupted him:"Ten Greatest Martial Arts Masters?!? They are not fit to be called masters! Continue!"

Guo Pianxian said:"It was said that lord Dongfang and Lady Zhu were enemies, when he heard this news he gathered 19 of the lords of the 72 isles in the South Sea. He also invited Heavenly King Li and Granny Hu to help him."

Yu Peiyu said:"Yes, Granny Hu! She was also one of those ten experts, although her martial arts wasn't as good as the rest. But she was a master in using poison."

Guo Pianxian said:"Lord Dongfang invited Granny Hu for the purpose of fighting....."

He didn't finish his sentence, he was about to say fight poison with poison. But when he saw the stern look on Zhu Lei' Er's face he quickly swallowed his final words.

Yu Peiyu asked:"All these people knew the whereabouts of Lady Zhu?"

Guo Pianxian said:"Yes, I think so."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Did they find her?"

Guo Pianxian said:"I'm afraid they did."

Yu Peiyu asked:"That must be some battle. What was the outcome?"

Guo Pianxian said:"No one knows."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Nobody?"

Guo Pianxian smiled wryly:"I'm afraid nobody in this world knows."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Why?"

Guo Pianxian said:" Dongfang Daming, Heavenly King Li, Granny Hu and others were very careful but they had a feast before their expedition at the Yueyang restaurant. However there were some other martial artists at that restaurant too and overheard a bit of their conversation. Although these people didn't spread the word openly but they did pay attention to this matter. They even send out some people to investigate and try to find out the outcome of this battle."

Yu Peiyu asked:" And?"

Guo Pianxian said:" Nothing."

Yu Peiyu looked very surprised.

Guo Pianxian continued:" Because Dongfang Daming, Granny Hu, Heavenly King Li and all those 19 island lords never came back. It was like they disappeared into thin air. Nobody could find them."

Yu Peiyu said:" Could it be that they were all killed by Lady....."

He looked at Zhu Lei'Er and kept quiet.

Guo Pianxian said:" Although Lady Zhu was a daunting woman but everyone thought it was not possible for her to....."

He looked at Zhu Lei'Er too and kept quiet.

The sick old man asked:" Do you want to know what really happened to those people?"

Guo Pianxian smiled:" If you don't mind telling us, sir."

The old man said calmly:" Very well! I will tell you, Dongfang Daming, Heavenly King Li, Granny Hu and those 19 island lords were all killed by me."

He calmly said that, like it was the most natural thing in this world.

But Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu believed him and were flabbergasted.

Although they had never seen the martial arts of Dongfang Daming, Granny Hu, Heavenly King Li and others but they knew that the 13 leaders of the orthodox schools were a bit afraid of these people. They said enough about their martial arts and all those 19 lords were said to be excellent martial artists and even one of them came to a draw with the leader of the Nanhai School, Yu Xuan.

It was unbelievable that this feeble, bedridden old man killed these 22 martial arts experts.

The old man continued:"The mother of Lei'Er didn't flee from her enemies, but she had enough of the kind of life she lead. She fell in love with a man and together they decided to spend their lives in peace."

Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu looked at the old man and thought:Could that man be you?

But of course they didn't ask.

The old man asked:"Do you want to know who this man was?"

Guo Pianxian smiled:"If it is not convenient you don't have to tell us, sir."

The old man said:"He was the son of Dongfang Daming, his name was Dongfang Meiyu (as in precious fine jade)."

Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu both felt relieved and somehow also a bit disappointed. Zhu Lei'Er walked to the old man and put her head down on the old man's body.

The old man continued:"This Dongfang Meiyu was a very handsome young man worthy of his name. But Zhu Mei fell in love with this young man who was only half her age. You should know that when a woman like Zhu Mei falls in love.....(sigh*)..."

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian didn't know what to say, Silver Blossom sighed:"That's right."

The old man continued:"This Dongfang Meiyu was very handsome but he was rotten on the inside. His personality was absolutely revolting."

He was scolding the father of Zhu Lei' Er, but she just listened and it seemed that she too felt her father deserved to be scolded.

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian were a bit surprised by this.

The old man said:"Zhu Mei became an exemplary wife to Dongfang Meiyu. She did everything a good wife should do, she forgot her past and fully dedicated herself into her new life."

Yu Peiyu thought:If a man can find a woman like that he really has no regrets anymore.

Silver Blossom thought:I wonder whether I will change for the man I love.....Why am I thinking of this? I am about to die anyway.

Guo Pianxian thought:Zhu Mei grew tired of her previous life style and fully devoted herself to her new identity. But that Dongfang Meiyu is still young, he doesn't want to spend the rest of his life like that.

The three of them each had a different thought but didn't speak it out.

The old man said:"Zhu Mei was blindly in love but Dongfang Meiyu, who grew weary of such a boring life, hinted to Zhu Mei to return to the Palace of Enchantment."

Guo Pianxian smiled and Yu Peiyu shook his head.

Silver Blossom asked:"Did she return?"

The sick old man said:"Although she was quite old but because of the youth preserving skills she still looked like a beauty. Dongfang Meiyu couldn't bear to part with her yet...."

Silver Blossom thought:Although Zhu Mei had turned over a new leaf but her skills could still keep Dongfang Meiyu

happy. I wonder whether I could match her later on.
She looked at Yu Peiyu and saw him sighing.

The old man continued:"These youth preserving skills would loose effect when women become pregnant. Zhu Mei knew this of course but as she grew older her desire to become mother also grew. Besides they were childless for many years. In the end she got pregnant and gave birth to her." He pointed to Zhu Lei'Er who had tears in her eyes.

Silver Blossom asked:"After she gave birth did she degenerate?"

With the exception of Silver Blossom everyone was interested in the history of Zhu Mei. But she had only interest in the youth preserving methods of Zhu Mei.

The old man said:"Yes, within six months a matchless beauty became an old ugly woman."

Silver Blossom sighed and thought:I will never have children.

Yu Peiyu said:"But Dongfang Meiyu already grew weary of Lady Zhu, now he....now....he would....."

After he saw Zhu Lei'Er's expression he couldn't continue.

The old man continued:"Zhu Mei was an intelligent woman, one day when she looked into the mirror and saw that she was losing her hair. She knew she couldn't keep his heart anymore."

Silver Blossom thought:"If I were her I would kill Dongfang Meiyu, if I cannot have him no one can.

Thinking of this she looked at Yu Peiyu and his scar and immediately lowered her head and didn't look up for some time.

The old man continued:"One night she held her baby in her arms and cried the entire night, the next morning she went to the room of Dongfang Meiyu and woke him."

Silver Blossom asked:"Weren't they...they sleeping in the same bed?"

The old man said:"Ever since she gave birth to Lei'Er Dongfang Meiyu lived in another room. His excuse was that Zhu Mei could take better care of their daughter. But in fact...(humph*)"

Guo Pianxian thought:You really can't blame him, if I were him I wouldn't like to sleep next to an old ugly woman either.....

He noticed that the cold eyes of the man were watching him, he quickly smiled:"What did Lady Zhu wake him up for?"

The old man sighed:"You will never guess what she did."

Everyone stayed quiet and wanted to find out what Zhu Mei did, the old man continued:"She woke him up and said goodbye to him."

Yu Peiyu, Silver Blossom and Guo Pianxian cried:"Goodbye."

The old man said:"Yes, she knew that with her looks now Dongfang Meiyu didn't love her anymore. She cried the entire night and thought everything over. She wanted to give Dongfang Meiyu back his freedom. She told him that she didn't want to become his burden anymore. She told him that he could find a nice pretty young woman and settle down with her, as for herself she will never see him again. She hoped that he would live happily ever after and take good care of their little daughter."

Although these words were conveyed by a man, but everyone could clearly see the sadness of Zhu Mei. And everyone sympathized with her.

Even Guo Pianxian thought:I never thought that Zhu Mei really loved Dongfang Meiyu that deeply. If a man can find a woman who loves him that much he could considerate himself very lucky.

Yu Peiyu asked:"Did Dongfang Meiyu really leave her?"

The old man said:"No, after he heard that he swore never to leave her. He will love her no matter what, he said he doesn't mind her appearances."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"It seems Dongfang Meiyu isn't that heartless after all."

The old man said:"You're right he isn't heartless, he simply never had a heart."

He was looking furious and angry and was sweating now.

After a short break he continued:"Zhu Mei was touched by his words and believed him. Also she wasn't willing to leave him and their young daughter at the time."

Yu Peiyu asked carefully:"Did Dongfang Meiyu have an ulterior motive?"

The old man said:" She took really good care of Lei'Er and Dongfang Meiyu. She did everything she could possibly do to please him. After some years the father of Dongfang Meiyu and about 20 martial arts experts found them."

He took a small break again, everyone knew there was something else to the story.

The old man said:"Zhu Mei knew that she had made a lot of enemies in the past, that is why she moved to a safe and secretive place to live. But how could Dongfang Daming find her?"

Guo Pianxian smiled:"That is very strange, could you tell us, sir?"

The old man said:"Even Zhu Mei was surprised but when she saw what Dongfang Meiyu did. It became clear to her."

Yu Peiyu asked:"What did he do?"

The old man angrily said:"When he saw his father and the others he quickly....."

He smashed a small table next to his bed.

Silver Blossom, Guo Pianxian and Yu Peiyu guessed that Dongfang Meiyu was the one who told his father where they

lived.

The man was panting heavily and was still very angry.

Zhu Lei' Er sobbed: "Third uncle.....please don't be angry anymore and spare your strength."

The old man continued angrily: "Nobody knows this secret, if I am to die now. At least I want some people to know your mother's grievances."

Zhu Lei' Er sobbed loudly too.

The old man said: "That Dongfang Meiyu, he is a bastard! Because when Lei' Er turned two, Dongfang Meiyu secretly gave a lot of money to a merchant. He told the merchant to travel to The Nocturne City on the Sun and Moon Island.

He also told the merchant that his father would also give him a large amount of money when he received his letter. However it was years later that the letter arrived in the hands of Dongfang Daming, because the location of the Sun and Moon Island was very secretive."

Now they knew what happened and felt that Dongfang Meiyu was a revolting man. Everybody hated Dongfang Meiyu for this even

Guo Pianxian felt that Dongfang Meiyu was too vicious.

Suddenly the old man turned to Guo Pianxian and said: "I know that you're not a very emotional man, tell me what would you do in such a situation?"

Guo Pianxian was stunned and stuttered: "Sir.....sir.....I.....I....."

He felt that the old man's eyes were looking through him and felt scared and answered: "I think I would just leave."

The old man said: "See even the most vicious man would just leave. Dongfang Meiyu, that bastard! He knew that Zhu Mei's martial arts were very high and was very cunning. He was afraid she would turn against him, by that time he couldn't escape from her wrath."

Yu Peiyu angrily said:" But Lady Zhu allowed him to leave. But why...why?"

The old man said:" Dongfang Meiyu thought Zhu Mei was just testing him, he didn't see that Zhu Mei really loved him. Also he wanted to be sure that she would never be able to harm him, he wanted her dead."

Even Guo Pianxian sighed:"What a ruthless bastard!"

Yu Peiyu asked:" So Lady Zhu died at their hands?"

The old man said:"You forgot to ask me something?"

Yu Peiyu asked:"What did we forget?"

The old man said:"You forgot to ask me, how I would know all this."

Everyone felt strange that he would know this entire story.

The old man said:"I am a lonesome wanderer, after a particular event in my life I grew weary of men. I thought there were no decent humans anymore in the world, whenever I saw a man I would want to kill him."

Why would he tell them about his own personality but nobody dared to ask.

The old man said:"I knew I couldn't just kill all the men in the world, so I decided to leave the civilized world to escape from men. It was Spring that time I was in Fukien province and was at a harbor. I confiscated a large ship and scared away the passengers and the crew, I felt very happy and I had enough provisions to last for a very long time. I was enjoying the scenery when I saw a man floating in the sea he was severely wounded. I held tightly on to a log."

Guo Pianxian thought:If that man could be saved, you wouldn't rescue him. But seeing he was about to die, you might as well save him because you have nothing else to do on the ship.

The old man continued:"Although I hate men and wasn't really keen on saving him. But I did want to know who

injured him? Were there pirates in the neighbourhood, if so I might as well kill them. At least I can peace my anger a bit."

Chapter 18 - Remembrance Of The Past

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian looked at each other and thought that this girl was very intelligent. She could clearly analyze the situation and come up with a reasonable deduction in a matter of moments.

Yu Peiyu thought: Could that powerful expert be the teacher of that Tian Jiyun?

Yu Peiyu thought over the old man's words: Although he hates men, but he does still have a conscience and is still upholding chivalry. Killing pirates is a good thing. He now had a lot of respect for the old man.

The old man looked at him and asked: "Do you know who that man was I rescued?"

Yu Peiyu thought for a moment and asked: "Is it the merchant?"

The old man looked at him and revealed a small smile and said: "Yes. Do you know who killed him?"

Guo Pianxian said: "Dongfang Daming?"

The old man nodded and said: "Yes, when he delivered the letter to Dongfang Daming and was waiting for his reward. Little did he know that Dongfang Daming killed his entire family of 37 people. The merchant took his entire family of 37 on his houseboat and found the Sun and Moon Isle after searching for it for years. Fortunately he managed to escape but was mortally wounded. He stayed alive because he wanted to expose the crimes of Dongfang Daming."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "It seems justice prevails after all, Heaven kept him alive so he could tell us what happened."

Guo Pianxian sighed:"If I were that merchant I would not have delivered that letter in the first place. Dongfang Daming and his son will never allow this secret to be known. The messenger was bound to get killed."

The old man said:"All of these merchants on the sea are clever businessmen, he thought of that too. He just wanted to cheat

Dongfang Meiyu of that large sum of money and throw away the letter. What could Dongfang Meiyu do? However curiosity killed the cat, he shouldn't have opened the letter and read it."

Silver Blossom said:"I would have done the same thing."

The old man said coldly:"That why I don't pity nosy people when they die."

Silver Blossom lowered her head and kept quiet.

Yu Peiyu asked:"But what was in the letter?"

The old man said:"Dongfang Meiyu, the bastard, said he was held captive by Zhu Mei. He requested his father to save him, he also asked his father to heavily reward the messenger. He told his father to give the merchant so much money that it will never be used up."

The old man paused for a moment and continued:"But there is no such thing as money that will never be used up. No matter how much money you have, some day it will run up. Unless you die that way your money will never be used up."

Guo Pianxian exclaimed:"Of course Dongfang Meiyu wrote that to remind his father to kill the merchant. The poor fool was blinded by greed."

The old man said:"Dongfang Meiyu knew that the merchant would read the letter, so he added that extra bit to tempt him. Greed drives men mad."

Yu Peiyu said:"Sir, you must have felt that their actions were too despicable so he hastened to assist Zhu Mei."

The old man said:"Yes, indeed. But he told something else, do you know where Zhu Mei retreated to?"

Yu Peiyu said:"They retreated, so....."

Guo Pianxian said:"Of course they hid in some small town, not drawing any unwanted attention. Just leading a normal life."

Yu Peiyu asked:"You mean, they hid in this small town?"

The old man sighed:"This is a rather small town, nobody is really interested here to dig up someone's past. Some Wulin people occasionally pass by. But they would not pay any attention to an ordinary woman and man. Zhu Mei could have lived her for 80 years and still nobody would know who she really was. The merchant's name was Li Mengtang, he was born in this village but left it many years ago to do business elsewhere. That year he came back to visit his relatives and Dongfang Meiyu deliberately got himself acquainted with him."

Guo Pianxian asked:"Didn't Lady Zhu suspect anything?"

The old man sighed:"Zhu Mei had devoted herself to the care of Lei'Er and Dongfang Meiyu. Futhermore how would she have guessed the motives of Dongfang Meiyu? Talking to some neighbours is very natural and normal. Everybody in the town knew she was a very good wife and mother, everybody praised her even. But when Li Mengtang read the letter he was shocked, but he was blinded by greed and lead to his demise."

He angrily wanted to smash another table, Zhu Lei'Er put out her hand and stopped him.

And said:"Third uncle don't get upset anymore."

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian were both surprised to see that this young girl had such high martial arts.

Guo Pianxian thought:She is not inferior to me and she has learnt a great deal from her mother's mermerizing skills too."

The old man sighed:"When I heard Li Mengtang I was furious. I never thought there would be such a heartless man in the world. I asked Li Mengtang where the Nocturne City was, he told me the location and knew I would avenge him. He closed his eyes and died."

Yu Peiyu said:"So sir you rushed over to the Nocturne City?"

The old man answered:"Yes, but I was too late. Dongfang Daming and others had left the Sun and Moon Island."

Silver Blossom and Guo Pianxian thought:Why would he put so much effort in this entire situation? It is none of his business anyway. Furthermore he said that he was tired of men and their affairs.

Only Yu Peiyu guessed the motives of the old man:He must have met a heartless woman in his younger days. That's why he can't stand people who treat their lovers that ruthless.

The old man was panting heavily now.

Yu Peiyu wanted to ask:What happened to Zhu Mei and Dongfang Meiyu? Why were you injured?

But he restrained himself from asking these questions.

Zhu Lei' Er said:"The congee is ready, you must be hungry too."

Guo Pianxian smiled:"We wouldn't dare to ask you to serve us."

Zhu Lei' Er ignored him and went downstairs.

Silver Blossom begged:"Miss Zhu, please save me. I will do anything you ask of me."

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly:"Receive my manual and become my pupil. Always listen and obey my teachings, disobey me and suffer the consequences."

Those were the words Zhu Mei left behind in the Palace of Enchantment, after Yu Peiyu and Jin Yanzi discovered the secret a lot of unexpected events happened.

Both of them totally forgot about the manual, it was later found by Silver Blossom. She started to read and study it a bit and felt it was a marvellous manual and the methods of Zhu Mei were quite close to her personality too.

But she had already forgotten the warnings of Zhu Mei, now she heard Zhu Lei' Er say them again.

She sat down and was very afraid again.

Suddenly Zhu Lei' Er turned to Guo Pianxian and asked:"Who is downstairs?"

Guo Pianxian said:"A friend of mine."

Zhu Lei' Er scoffed:"Just a friend?"

Guo Pianxian smiled:"Miss Zhu has very sharp eyes."

Zhu Lei' Er said:"Why did you leave her downstairs?"

Guo Pianxian thought:It is your fault that she is in her present condition. Why all of a sudden the concern for her welfare."

Of course he wouldn't say that to Zhu Lei' Er and smiled:"I felt that it may not be that suitable for her to be upstairs. So I left her downstairs."

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly:"Another heartless man."

Guo Pianxian was very anxious when he heard that remark and quickly carried Zhong Jing upstairs again.

In awhile Zhu Lei' Er came back with a few bowls of congee for everyone, Yu Peiyu stared at his bowl and looked very pensive.

Suddenly the old man said:"Someone is here."

Everyone kept quiet and didn't hear a thing, they were thinking that the old man was hearing things.

But then they heard a three strange knocking sounds like a bird was pecking at the door, and a voice said:"My name is Tian Jiyun, I am here to deliver a letter."

The voice sounded young and clear.

Zhu Lei' Er frowned:"What kind of letter? And who is this Tian Jiyun?"

She started to walk downstairs, the sick old man said:" Be careful this Tian Jiyun has fairly good martial arts. It also seems that he has learnt the Vigorously Eagle's Claw. If you cannot stop him let him come upstairs."

Zhu Lei' Er answered:"I know what to do."

But she was not convinced by her uncle's words.

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian were shocked that the old man could distinguish the martial arts of the messenger just by hearing him knock on the door.

Needless to say the messenger had a very high level of martial arts if he could come near the door without being noticed by Guo Pianxian and others.

Yu Peiyu said:"I'll have a look too."

Zhu Lei' Er had already opened the door downstairs, there was a young man in a purple robe standing in front of her. He looked quite handsome but had a very arrogant look on his face.

Zhu Lei' Er said:"Are you the messenger? Where is the letter?"

The young man, Tian Jiyun smiled:"I cannot give this letter to you little Miss, can I come in?"

His tone sounded very arrogant.

Zhe Lei' Er smiled lightly:"I have never heard that a messenger can barge into someone's house like that. If you don't give me the letter now I suggest you would take your letter and leave."

Tian Jiyun laughed:"You have a very sharp tongue there, little Miss. I'm not sure if you can receive the letter."

He took out the letter and respectfully put the letter in front of Zhu Lei' Er.

Yu Peiyu saw that his arms were bent a little bit and knew that he generated his internal power to his hands.

If Zhu Lei'Er would take the letter she might get injured.

Yu Peiyu wanted to intervene, but Zhu Lei'Er said coldly:"Just put the letter on the floor."

Tian Jiyun smiled:"Are you afraid the letter might hurt you?"

Zhu Lei'Er coldly said:"You look like a decent man, haven't you heard that men and women should put some distance between themselves."

Tian Jiyun laughed:"Good little girl! Now I know why so many people have fallen for your tricks."

He slowly moved the letter to Zhu Lei'Er's face, although it was just an envelope with a sheet of paper but in the hands of

Tian Jiyun this letter was no different from a sabre.

Zhu Lei'Er still stood there and said again:"I told you to put the letter down on the ground."

Suddenly he swiftly moved around Zhu Lei'Er, she couldn't stop him from going upstairs anymore.

Tian Jiyun smiled:"Since you said that we should put a distance between us, I will deliver the letter personally."

A voice said:"No need you can give the letter to me."

Tian Jiyun stopped and saw a handsome young man blocking the stairs, Tian Jiyun always felt proud of his appearances but when he saw this young man he felt that he looked ten times better than himself.

Tian Jiyun asked:"Do you live here?"

Yu Peiyu said:"No, I don't. The lord of the mansion is asleep, you can....."

Tian Jiyun said:"Since you don't live here I cannot give you the letter."

He pushed out his palms, but Yu Peiyu didn't avoid his palms and used his palms to receive his blow.

Tian Jiyun said arrogantly: "Can you really block my stance?"

He snapped his finger and the letter flew back into his sleeve, he generated his internal strength to his both palms and pushed out towards Yu Peiyu.

When the both of them received each other's palms both were shocked.

Yu Peiyu was born with immense strength which no one could match, but this young man could force him to bend his palms backwards a bit.

But Tian Jiyun was even more surprised, he never would have guessed that his refined looking young man has such extraordinary strength. He should have gained the advantage, because he leant forward crashing on Yu Peiyu.

It felt like the palms of Yu Peiyu were made out of metal, he increased the energy to his palms as did Yu Peiyu.

Both were sweating and Tian Jiyun regretted to have started this competition of strength with this young man.

Zhu Lei'Er walked towards Tian Jiyun and said: "As the two of you are competing with each other, I will take the letter and deliver it."

Tian Jiyun couldn't defend himself against Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu, but Yu Peiyu couldn't drop his counter-attack either.

Suddenly Tian Jiyun gracefully leapt into the air and over Yu Peiyu's head and was upstairs.

Both Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er rushed upstairs too, they heard Tian Jiyun saying: "This lowly disciple is Tian Jiyun. I hope sir can grant me an audience."

The old man asked casually: "Who sent you?"

Tian Jiyun said: "Everything is explained in the letter." He took out the letter and held in front of him, he kept

looking at the sick old man. Suddenly his eyes looked sinister and cold.

Zhu Lei'Er screamed:"Third uncle, be careful his hands....."

The old man raised his hand and the letter flew out of Tian Jiyun's hands and the old man had taken the letter from him.

Tian Jiyun paced three steps back and said:"I've completed my task, I will take my leave now."

He turned around and started to walk down the stairs, but he quickly shifted his position and had grabbed Zhu Lei'Er by her hands. She couldn't move anymore.

Tian Jiyun said:"Everyone don't move! If you want her unharmed all of you stay right where you are. I promise you, she will return shortly."

Nobody could do a thing at this moment, the sick old man asked:"Where are you taking her? Who wants to meet her?"

Tian Jiyun said:"My teacher....."

The old man interrupted him coldly:"If he wants to meet her, tell him to come here!"

He flew out his bed and his movements were spectacular. He was as like a dragon soaring through the sky or even a phoenix dancing in the clouds.

Tian Jiyun said loudly:"Sir, don't you value....."

Before he could say [her life]. The old man was closing in on him and he saw that the hand of the old man formed a claw was aiming for his neck. He couldn't even escape now, let alone harm Zhu Lei'Er. He let go of her and raised his palms to counter-attack.

But the old man's movements kept changing mid-air. He looked like a graceful phoenix and before Tian Jiyun knew what happened, the old man had grabbed hold of him and Tian Jiyun was unable to move now.

Silver Blossom, Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian knew that this old man must be an extraordinary martial arts expert but

nobody had anticipated that he would be this powerful. The experts they had seen so far were nothing compared to him. Guo Pianxian thought: Well, this arrogant little brat will lose his internal power now.

But the old man scolded: "I will let you go this once. But remember to behave yourself in the future. Leave!"

He chucked Tian Jiyun out of the window and he himself swiftly returned to his bed panting heavily.

They could hear Tian Jiyun saying: "Sir, you have amazing skills. I hope to see a bit more of your abilities in the future." His tone was still very arrogant.

Yu Peiyu thought: Impressive young man! I wonder who his teacher is?

The old man scoffed: "Yu Fanghe and his lackeys are not fit to be the teacher of this young man."

Yu Peiyu said: "Indeed, he isn't a disciple of the 13 schools. I wonder who his teacher is."

The old man closed his eyes and shook his head.

Zhu Lei' Er asked: "Third uncle, why did you just let him go like that?"

The old man said coldly: "When two countries are at war it a custom not to kill the emissaries or messengers."

Zhu Lei' Er said: "This Tian Jiyun came here to see whether you have regained your health, third uncle. Now that he has gone back Yu Fanghe and others will surely return."

The old man said: "Even if we were to die today we cannot throw away our pride and principles."

Zhu Lei' Er nodded and said: "Yes." She lowered her head and remained silent.

Yu Peiyu admired the old man very much now, Guo Pianxian smiled: "Even so, sir you could have drained his internal energy first."

The old man didn't answer and looked at him with disgust.

Zhu Lei' Er scoffed: "My third uncle only absorbs the energy of people who are willing to give up their martial arts or people who deserve to lose their martial arts. Someone like Mr. Guo has passable internal power, why wouldn't my third uncle use your internal strength too?"

Guo Pianxian stayed quiet, normally he was a very arrogant man but he didn't dare to retort back. Nonetheless he was a bit angered and after awhile he couldn't help but to ask: "Miss Zhu, forgive me for asking. But who would be willingly give up his internal energy?"

Zhu Lei' Er looked at Silver Blossom and said: "Who knows? Some people might want to lose their martial arts."

Silver Blossom got goosebumps again when she saw Zhu Lei' Er giving her a cold look.

Yu Peiyu asked: "What is in the letter?"

After he had asked this question he immediately regretted asking because he thought the old man wouldn't answer anyway.

But the old man threw the letter to Zhu Lei' Er and said: "Read it the letter out loud."

Zhu Lei' Er took out the letter from the envelope and read: "Dear Sir,

We have admired your chivalry for many years, we are very pleased that you are here in this town. We take it that Sir will not harbour the daughter of a Around midnight we will pay our respects to you.

Your sincerely,

Yu Fanghe and others."

Zhu Lei' Er deliberately ignored three characters, everyone knew those characters were bound to be insulting towards her late mother. She also didn't read out the family name of the old man.

She didn't want Yu Peiyu, Guo Pianxian, Silver Blossom and Zhong Jing know the identity of the old man yet.

The old man sneered:"Yu Fanghe and others, (*humph). They're not worthy enough to pay their respects to me."

Zhu Lei' Er said softly:"They must have found someone powerful to support them. If not they wouldn't be this audacious."

Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian looked at each other and thought that this girl was very intelligent. She could clearly analyze the situation and come up with a reasonable deduction in a matter of moments.

Yu Peiyu thought:Could that powerful expert be the teacher of that Tian Jiyun?

He felt worried about the old man and Zhu Lei' Er. The old man said:"We should deliver a message too. Lei' Er, tell them I will be awaiting their arrival right here."

Guo Pianxian scoffed in his heart:In other words you are sending a reconnaissance party too.

Zhu Lei' Er shook her head and said:"I won't go."

The old man asked:"Why?"

Zhu Lei' Er looked at Guo Pianxian and Silver Blossom and said:"I will stay here and look after you."

Yu Peiyu understood that she was worried about the old man, she feared that Guo Pianxian and Silver Blossom might harm him.

By the looks of it the old man wasn't capable of defending himself against Guo Pianxian or Silver Blossom. When Yu Fanghe, Tian Jiyun and his teacher arrive they have no means of defending themselves against them.

Yu Peiyu said:"If Miss Zhu cannot go, I'm very happy to go on her behalf."

The old man looked at Yu Peiyu and asked:"You?"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Do you think I am suitable for this job, sir?"

The old man looked at him for some time and said:"Come over here!"

Zhong Jing suddenly yelled:"Don't go! He wants to absorb your internal energy."

Yu Peiyu still walked to the old man and said:"Sir, I await your instructions."

The old man whispered something very softly in Yu Peiyu's ears. Nobody could hear what he said, but they saw that Yu Peiyu looked pleased and happy.

He said:"Thank you, sir."

The old man asked:"Do you understand?"

Yu Peiyu closed his eyes and looked very pensive, after awhile he opened his eyes. He stretched his arms and made a few gestures. It looked like he was drawing a series of circles. With the exception of Guo Pianxian no one understood what he was doing.

But Guo Pianxian saw that within every circle there was a lethal stance hidden. Yu Peiyu increased his speed and was drawing more circles and faster, suddenly he turned from fast to slow.

His face was turning red now and he stopped and took a deep breath.

He asked the old man:"What do you think, sir?"

The old man looked pleased and said:"Very good! You can go now."

Yu Peiyu bowed to the old man and left. Guo Pianxian already figured out that the old man taught Yu Peiyu a powerful technique. The old man was afraid he might get injured when delivering the message.

Guo Pianxian regretted why he didn't volunteer himself, that way he could have learnt a new formidable stance.

But he was also surprised that Yu Peiyu could master that stance in a short while. I wonder how that is possible.

The old man could see what martial arts Yu Peiyu had learnt in the past, so he taught him a stance that was quite similar to the style of Yu Peiyu. Furthermore Yu Peiyu is a very intelligent young man who easily integrated this stance into his own martial arts.

The old man closed his eyes and fell asleep again, Zhu Lei' Er said softly: "Another 10 hours before midnight."

She turned to Silver Blossom and said coldly: "I can guarantee you that you won't be around by that time."

Silver Blossom begged: "Miss, please save me. Do remember I belong to the Palace of Enchantment too."

Zhu Lei' Er said: "Now you admit that you're a disciple of the Palace of Enchantment."

Silver Blossom lowered her head and stuttered: "I.....I....."

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly: "I'm afraid it is too late now."

Silver Blossom was completely lost and didn't know what to say or to do anymore.

However, Zhu Lei' Er continued: "If you want to live, there is still one option left."

Silver Blossom happily: "I will do anything. Please tell me?"

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly: "Can't you think of it yourself?"

Silver Blossom thought: Little b-i-t-c-h- if I could think of a way to save myself why would I beg for your help.

Silver Blossom smiled: "I am a stupid and dumb woman. How would I know a mysterious secret like that? Miss Zhu, please tell me?"

Zhu Lei' Er turned around and ignored her.

Silver Blossom was so frustrated and angry that she wanted to cuss Zhu Lei' Er.

Guo Pianxian now suddenly said: "I think I know the method Miss Zhu is referring to."

Silver Blossom was surprised and said: "You do?"

Guo Pianxian nodded.

Silver Blossom said anxiously:"Tell me! Tell me now!"

Guo Pianxian said coldly:"What do I gain by telling you?"

Silver Blossom was furious but smiled seductively:" Please tell me! I will always remember you and....."

Guo Pianxian interrupted:"I don't want you to remember me."

Silver Blossom said:"I will do and give you anything you want."

Guo Pianxian asked:"Anything?" He looked at Silver Blossom's parcel full of treasures.

Silver Blossom nodded.

Zhong Jing thought:This woman is really a shameless b-i-t-c-h-.

Guo Pianxian smiled:"I think I understand the words of Miss Zhu now, about the absorbing internal energy of willing people."

Silver Blossom slowly began to understand where he was getting at and was breaking out in a cold sweat.

Guo Pianxian explained:"If you're willing to give your internal energy away. Sir, will absorb your energy and your poison away."

Silver Blossom stuttered:"But...but....that way won't he be poisoned too."

Zhu Lei' Er scoffed:"That little bit of poison is nothing compared to what my third uncle is used to."

Silver Blossom thought about this and looked at her hand and screamed:"Alright, take my internal strength."

Zhu Lei' Er said:"If it's fine that you're willing to donate but we might not want to accept your internal power."

Silver Blossom begged:"What do you want?"

Guo Pianxian said:"You can beg people to absorb your skills."

Silver Blossom was stunned and sighed deeply:"Please Miss Zhu! I beg of you....."

Zhong Jing felt very happy and thought:Justice prevails!

Zhu Lei' Er smiled:"Remember you came crying to us."

Silver Blossom couldn't control her tears anymore and started to cry loudly.

* * *

The entire town was deserted, Yu Peiyu didn't see a living soul. It was quite eerie to walk here.

After walking for some time he could hear some soft talking, he walked to the noise and saw the villagers were rounded up outside the town.

Yu Fanghe must have forced them to stay here, all the villagers were looking angry and shocked.

They must be thinking what these strangers want in their hometown.

Two muscular men walked up to Yu Peiyu and one of them said:"My friend, where are you headed for?"

These two men didn't know who Yu Peiyu was, but Yu Peiyu could tell from their clothes that they were warriors of Yu Fanghe. He disliked them immediately and said coldly:"I'm here to deliver a message, could you lead the way."

The other man smiled:"Chancellor Yu predicted that someone would deliver a message, so he instructed us to await your arrival. Even you must respect and admire the intelligence of chancellor Yu."

Yu Peiyu just grunted, the man was not pleased to see Yu Peiyu's expression and coldly said:"Follow me if you want to deliver a message! If I didn't have orders of chancellor Yu (*humph)."

But Yu Peiyu wasn't angered by his reaction and thought: If this Yu Fanghe had more henchmen like these two reckless idiots, he won't be difficult to deal with.

The two men lead Yu Peiyu to a Taoist temple, because most of the villagers of this town had the family name Li. They worshipped Lao Tse, whose family name was also Li.

The temple looked very impressive and not too old, the villagers always maintained the temple in an excellent state.

The two men stopped in front of the doors and said coldly: "Wait here and don't start lurking about! We will inform chancellor Yu, that you are here. Do you understand."

If someone else would hear this he/she would certainly slap these two men silly for their rude behaviour. But Yu Peiyu just smiled: "Thank you."

The two men coldly smiled and entered the temple. They were talking to each other but it was loud enough for Yu Peiyu to hear.

"Chancellor Yu has overestimated his adversaries. Just look at this messenger, looks pretty weak to me."

"It is a shame that he has a scar. Otherwise he could sing in the opera and he doesn't have overdress to look like a woman. Hahahaha!"

Yu Peiyu wasn't angered in fact he felt rather pleased that these two men looked down upon him. Young people usually are afraid that others will look down upon them and treat them with scorn. Even Yu Peiyu was like that in the beginning, but he has learnt that keeping a low profile and being humble has many advantages.

A voice from inside the temple said: "Where is the letter?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I am the letter."

There was no response anymore, Yu Peiyu stood outside and waited for some time. Yu Peiyu loudly said: "The message is here."

There was still no response, Yu Peiyu laughed:"Aren't you interested in the message?"

Again no response, Yu Peiyu walked inside and was in the main hall of the temple. He saw a big cauldron in the middle and on the altar was a big statue of Lao Tse.

There were 12 armchairs in the main hall, Yu Peiyu understood now. They were afraid that the old man was sending someone over to gather information about them.

But why the mystery? Who was their powerful and mysterious ally?

Suddenly Yu Peiyu thought of something and bowed to an armchair and said:"Yu Peiyu is here to pay his respects to chancellor Yu."

He respectfully bowed to the armchair and his tone was filled with respect. He did as if Yu Fanghe was really in the armchair.

Yu Fanghe's voice said:"Young master Yu is here. My apologies for not receiving you earlier."

Another loud and clear voice shouted:"Are you sent by Feng San!"

At this point Yu Peiyu knew that the sick old man was called Feng San, he felt that the other person was a very reckless and rash man. Reckless and rash men seldom could learn and master superior martial arts, but the this man had very powerful and profound internal energy. Yu Peiyu's ears were a bit numb by his hard roar.

Yu Peiyu knew that this man's martial arts was very high, he was probably the best expert he had encountered his entire life. His martial arts should be at least one level higher than the 13 leaders of the orthodox schools.

The man roared angrily when Yu Peiyu didn't answer his question:"I asked you a question! Why don't you answer!"

Yu Peiyu said:"Yes, I was sent by old Mr. Feng to deliver a....."

The voice shouted:"What is your relationship to Feng San! Is he your teacher!"

Yu Peiyu said:"I hardly know old Mr. Feng, because....."

The voice angrily roared:"Hardly know him! Why are you helping him to deliver a message! Don't you have something better to do!"

This man would interrupt Yu Peiyu before he could finish his sentences. Yu Peiyu thought:How did this man master such high martial arts with a bad temper like that?

Learning and mastering martial arts requires patience and dilligence. Yu Peiyu doesn't know that this man has really studied hard to reach this level of martial arts in his younger years.

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Delivering a message is a trivial matter. I was very happy to help out."

The man grunted and said:"Where is the letter!"

Yu Peiyu said:"Old Mr. Feng didn't write a letter."

The man laughed loudly:"What can't Feng San even pick a brush anymore?!?"

His laughter was very loud and even the altar was shaking.

Yu Peiyu waited till the man finished laughing and continued:"Old Mr. Feng wants to tell to everyone that he will be awaiting your arrival at midnight. Mr. Feng also hopes you will be on time....."

The man angrily shouted:"What does he mean with that? Is he implying that I am afraid of him?"

Yu Peiyu explained:"Old Mr. Feng is merely....."

The man roared:"How would you know what he is thinking? Little (*humph). Get out now, before I smash your little head!"

Yu Peiyu smiled:"I will take my leave now."

Initially he was happy that these people weren't troubling him, but now he was worried again. First of all he was worried about the old man, Feng San. Secondly he wanted to contact Hong Lianhua and explain the entire situation to him and hoped he would not be a part of this expedition. But it seems he couldn't stay here any longer and had to leave now.

He turned around was was walking towards the exit, suddenly he noticed someone attacked him from behind with a sharp blade.

The attacker was very fast, didn't give his adversary a chance to avoid his attack.

Yu Peiyu turned around and drew two circles in mid-air. The blade was stopped by the energy released from the circles. The sword broke into halves.

Yu Peiyu saw that the attacker was the Flowered Chestnut Sword Lin Shoujuan. Lin Shoujuan stood there surprised and shocked.

Yu Peiyu understood now, the conspirators were still suspicious of him and decided to test Yu Peiyu's abilities. They wanted to see what martial arts he learnt.

However Yu Peiyu used the new stance Feng San taught him, Lin Shoujuan stood there a bit embarrassed.

Someone else would have scoffed something like:Mr. Lin, you're a respected martial arts expert. I would never have guessed that you would....(*humph)

But Yu Peiyu just said:"Mr. Lin is a very fast swordsman."

He turned around and walked away again, but now a loud voice roared:"Don't move!"

The voice caused the leaves to fall down and a figure stood in front of Yu Peiyu.

Judging by the voice one would expect to see a giant. But it was skinny and short old Taoist priest in a blue robe. He had a robust beard and had a precious sword stuck in his girdle.

Yu Peiyu was shocked to see his lightning speed movements and said respectfully:"What can I do for you, reverend?"

The Taoist roared:"What is your relationship with Feng San? Is he your teacher?"

His eyes looked very fierce and and his grandeur was very awesome.

Yu Peiyu said:"I just told reverend earlier that I just met old Mr. Feng....."

The Taoist priest roared:"Rubbish! If you're not the pupil of Feng San, how would you know to use his martial arts. That stance Travelling On Clouds, Bestowing Rain And The Phoenix Dances Through The Ninth Heaven where did you learn it from?"

Every word of this Taoist was very loud and made one's ears very uncomfortable.

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Old Mr. Feng imparted my this stance when I was about to deliver the message. Reverend, to be honest I don't even know the name of that stance."

The Taoist yelled:"Rubbish! Nonsense! Mad! If Feng San would JUST teach you that stance like that he is a bigger idiot than I thought."

Yu Peiyu thought the cultivation of this Taoist had yet to be perfected, nonetheless he was a bit afraid of him.

Yu Peiyu replied:"Mr. Feng was afraid that I would disgrace his reputation in front of....."

The Taoist interrupted angrily:"Even if he did teach you that stance. It is impossible for you to master it in a short time. Nobody can learn superior techniques in a few moments, if you can do that you're not human!"

This Taoist priest was not a very intelligent man, he worked very hard to learn and master his martial arts. So he doesn't believe that there are people who can learn sophisticated skills in a flash.

Also because he endured many hardships in mastering his skills, his temper also grew. When he finally mastered his skills, he also became a very hot-tempered man and often would blame and scold everybody else for little incidents.

Yu Peiyu saw that he couldn't explain this situation and smiled wryly: "Reverend, if you don't believe I don't know what to say....."

The Taoist priest stamped his feet and angrily said: "Of course you don't know what to say. But if I were to test you, you will probably say that I am bullying a junior....."

He suddenly became even angrier: "You're saying that I'm bullying you right now, are you not?"

Yu Peiyu couldn't help laughing a bit and said: "But reverend you said that yourself. I didn't....."

The Taoist yelled: "Fine! You didn't say it, but why are you laughing?"

Yu Peiyu sighed and thought: What an unreasonable Taoist priest!

He was lost for words and thought the best thing to do is to keep quiet now.

But the Taoist roared: "Why aren't you answering? Have you become mute!"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "But reverend you said yourself that you couldn't test me yourself. If you don't mind I would like to take my leave now."

The Taoist yelled: "Stand still! If you weren't the pupil of Feng San I would have let you go. But now I want to see how many great techniques he has imparted you."

The Taoist turned around and yelled:"The students of Feng San are displaying their skills here! Why are my students? Are they dead or something, come out now!"

A voice said:" Master, you called? What are your orders?"

Yu Peiyu thought Tian Jiyun was the disciple of this Taoist priest, but now he saw that the student of this hot-tempered priest was a young and handsome Taoist priest. The young Taoist priest looked very elegant and refined, he wore a green robe and Yu Peiyu almost took him for a young girl.

The old Taoist priest yelled:"Yes, I called! Are you dumb? Can't you figure out what I want?"

The young Taoist smiled:" Master, do you want me to examine the martial arts of this young master?"

The old Taoist priest shouted:"If you know that already, why ask me?"

Yu Peiyu now understood that this old Taoist priest was always this hot-tempered. Even his own student received a loud scolding for nothing.

The young Taoist priest walked up to Yu Peiyu and smiled elegantly:"This lowly Taoist is called Shiyun. I hope young master Yu can give me a few pointers in martial arts."

Yu Peiyu liked this Shiyun immediately, he was a very kind and gentle person.

Yu Peiyu thought it was strange that the old Taoist priest would have a pupil like Shiyun. But soon he realised it was only natural. Because only someone with an extremely good temper like Shiyun could put up with a teacher like that. Someone else would have been banned by the old Taoist within three days, or would have left. Who wants to receive a loud scolding for nothing?

Yu Peiyu respectfully said:"Reverend, you're too kind. I wouldn't dare to battle you, but..."

The old Taoist priest yelled:"Don't just talk! Fight already!"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly, and Shiyun said respectfully: "Please forgive me for being rude now."

Shiyun raised his palm and pushed out, the energy released by this stance was amazingly powerful. Yu Peiyu couldn't imagine that a young Taoist priest who looked like a young girl would have such force and power.

Yu Peiyu realised that the style of the old Taoist was fierce and dominating. Not strange with his hot-temper.

After 20 stances Yu Peiyu started to pant, Yu Peiyu could use the stances of the Xiantian Wuji School to block or counter-attack some techniques. But he was afraid that Yu Fanghe, or the old Taoist priest would see through this.

Yu Peiyu just used some stances that he came up in his head at this point.

But he was being forced backwards.

The old Taoist priest yelled angrily: "Little brat! Use the martial arts Feng San taught you! Are you afraid that I will see and know his martial arts stances!.....Use more force, you little idiot! Where did you run off to last night! Didn't you sleep and rest where did your strength go!.....Yes, A Warrior Facing Arrows Backwards, A Fierce Tiger Opening The Mountain.....Damn! do you call that stance A Warrior Facing Arrows Backward? It is like your rubbing the back of your opponent!"

The first part he was scolding Yu Peiyu, the latter part was addressed to Shiyun.

The old Taoist priest thought Yu Peiyu didn't use the stances of Feng San because he was afraid that he would reveal the mysterious stances of Feng San to them.

But only Yu Peiyu knew the real reason for his current situation, and Shiyun attacked with everything he had.

All the other experts were impressed by Shiyun's martial arts.

After another 20 stances Yu Peiyu was facing a dangerous situation he used the stance of Feng San again, Travelling On Clouds, Bestowing Rain And The Phoenix Dances Through The Ninth Heaven to counter the attacking stances. Every time he was in danger he would rely on the technique of Feng San to save himself.

The old Taoist priest shouted:"Little brat! Use the other skills of Feng San! Why do you only use that one stance! If that idiot of a disciple of mine was any good, you would have died 80 times now!"

The Taoist was convinced that Yu Peiyu was the student of Feng San and had learnt many skills from him. He saw that Yu Peiyu had very powerful internal energy not below that of any martial arts expert of this time. It is not realistic that he would only know that stance, Travelling On Clouds, Bestowing Rain And The Phoenix Dances Through The Ninth Heaven.

Yu Peiyu was in a dire situation, fortunately the Taoist's yells distracted Yu Fanghe, Lin Shoujuan and others. If not they would surely be suspicious to why Yu Peiyu only used one stance over and over again.

Yu Peiyu was panting and sweating heavily, everyone was convinced that he couldn't last for another 30 stances. But somehow he managed due to his extraordinary strength.

After another 30 stances he was panting and sweating even more, everyone thought:Let's see if he can last for another 30 stances.

Chapter 19 - A Dragon Fighting For His Life

Hong Lianhua looked sharp at Yu Peiyu and asked: "Why does Miss Lin Daiyu want to kill you?"

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly: "Did.....didn't she tell you?"

Hong Lianhua said: "I did not ask her."

Yu Peiyu said: "But why are you asking me?"

Everyone thought Yu Peiyu would lose after 30 stances, but after several rounds of 30 stances he was still holding his grounds.

Everyone was surprised and happy to see such an interesting battle. No one dare to look down on Yu Peiyu and Shiyun.

Lin Shoujuan smiled: "This young fellow looks so refined and elegant, it is amazing that he has such extraordinary strength.

Only experts like Taoist brother Shiyun are capable of gaining the upperhand on him."

He was praising Yu Peiyu in public because his sword was broken in one go and tried his best to make Yu Peiyu good.

Tian Jiyun smiled lightly: "Really? I think his extraordinary strength is overrated."

He said it quite softly, but it was loud enough for the old Taoist to hear.

The Taoist angrily shouted: "Alright! Let's see what skills you have!"

Shiyun and Yu Peiyu had their hands entangled, and Yu Peiyu was wondering how to block his next attack. Suddenly

Shiyun flew up in the sky and their entanglement was severed.

The old Taoist pulled Shiyun away and yelled: "Worthless idiot! Stand here and watch how others will deal with that young brat! Who knows he might defeat that Yu child with one stance!"

Although he was scolding his student, but he was actually pointing his cynism towards Tian Jiyun. The Taoist knew that no one in this group could defeat Yu Peiyu with one stance.

Yu Fanghe and Lin Shoujuan looked at each other and smiled. They thought: He hasn't changed a bit, his temper and his trait to shield the faults of his students.

Shiyun made a somersault in mid-air and landed elegantly he put his hands together and smiled: "Please forgive me for being rude, young master Yu."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Thank you for showing mercy, reverend Shiyun."

The old Taoist looked at Tian Jiyun and yelled: "I want to see what marvellous skills your wretched teacher has taught you. What are you waiting for? Do you expect me to introduce you!"

Tian Jiyun sighed and said: "Reverend, you leave me no choice. Don't laugh when I make a fool out of myself, everyone."

When Yu Peiyu and Shiyun stopped fighting, Yu Peiyu had a chance to see who were standing in the main hall now. He saw Yu Fanghe and Tang Wushuang. Lin Shoujuan was still holding his broken sword and forgot to throw it away. The fight earlier was so spectacular that he totally forgot about what was going on.

There were a few other men, whom Yu Peiyu didn't recognize, but judging by their postures they were bound to be famous martial artists.

Yu Peiyu thought: Where is Hong Lianhua?

Suddenly he saw a figure standing behind the big cauldron, it was Hong Lianhua. Yu Peiyu also noticed that Madame Hai Tang wasn't here either. Yu Peiyu thought she wasn't too keen on being in the company of this lot.

The old Taoist yelled: "Hey little brat! Pay attention! Someone is saying that your strength is just mediocre. He wants to defeat you easily. Watch out he isn't as useless as my student! Why don't you admit defeat and kowtow to him!"

Again he was pointing at Yu Peiyu but was mocking Tian Jiyun.

The old Taoist was trying to get Yu Peiyu angry and hoped he would put everything he had in the battle against Tian Jiyun. He didn't want to see the student of someone else succeeding where his own pupil had failed. Everyone in the main hall understood what he was doing and smiled.

Tian Jiyun said: "I hope you will be lenient."

The old Taoist priest shouted: "What lenient! He didn't show lenience when he fought my student!"

The old Taoist priest was still yelling and scolding even when Yu Peiyu and Tian Jiyun had exchanged about 50 stances now.

Tian Jiyun's martial arts was very different from Shiyun. Shiyun's techniques were solid, fierce and powerful. Tian Jiyun's martial arts were illusive.

If Yu Peiyu could use the martial arts of his own school, Xiantian Wuji, he could easily defend himself. However this was not possible at the moment.

And the movements of Tian Jiyun were very fast, even Yu Peiyu had difficulty keeping track of his movements.

One of the martial artists who was watching this battle praised: "Seventh master Tian is called the Divine Dragon, it is surprising that his son has also such a high level in the art

of levitation. Even the famous Flying Eagle of the Seven Birds of Wulin is not his match in my opinion."

Another man laughed:"The Seven Birds don't really have any real abilities, the Flying Eagle Sun Heng cannot be compared to the son of the Divine Dragon."

Both men were quite old and had long gray beards, they must be famous martial artists. They were discussing and comparing the martial arts of Tian Jiyun but their intentions were that someone would praise them during this conversation.

And as they hoped, Lin Shoujuan smiled:"Old Fei is right. But don't forget about yourself. Who doesn't know that the Shadowless Mr. Du is unsurpassed in this field. Although you haven't reached the level of Seventh master Tian yet, but compared to young master Tian....."

That Shadowless Du Fei was hoping to hear this for a long time now, and he hoped that Lin Shoujuan would continue. Du Fei laughed a bit and pretended to care.

The other man said:"Young master Tian is good but he's still young and lacks the internal energy like brother Du."

Du Fei was feeling very happy but didn't show and said seriously:"Brother Xiang, I'm old now and my legs aren't that good anymore. Besides the art of levitation is just a side-track in martial arts. But brother Xiang's Invincible Fists are really awesome."

The Invincible Fists Long Beard Xiang was very pleased and laughed.

They started off praising Tian Jiyun but in the end they were praising each other.

The old Taoist priest was initially not in a very good temper but now he was even more angry and shouted:"A foul smell! Who has been breaking wind here?"

Shiyun said politely:"Master, I don't think anyone has broken a wind."

The old Taoist priest grunted:"What do you know? We use our arses to break wind but some people use their traps to break winds. Those farts have a stronger foul smell!"

Lin Shoujuan, Du Fei and Long Beard Xiang were all very angry but they didn't dare to speak up their anger.

Three of them thought:Your student was unable to defeat this Yu brat. But seeing that Tian Jiyun is about to win you're feeling frustrated. But why humiliate us?

The three of them were hoping that Tian Jiyun would defeat Yu Peiyu soon.

The old Taoist originally did wanted to see the martial arts style of Feng San. But now he really hoped that Yu Peiyu would defeat Tian Jiyun soon.

Yu Peiyu who felt confident about his martial arts before, was now quite disappointed. In one day he saw two young martial arts experts who were better than him. Because of his disappointment his power also dropped a bit.

Although Tian Jiyun was gaining the upperhand but he couldn't defeat Yu Peiyu either.

The old Taoist asked Shiyun:"How many stances did your battle last with that Yu kid?"

Shiyun answered respectfully:"About 300 stances, master."

The Taoist asked:"How many stances have they been fighting?"

Shiyun answered:"They're nearing 300 stances, master."

The Taoist laughed loudly:"Now you should know that bragging doesn't get you anywhere! I suggest you go back and train some more on your martial arts, and spend less time bragging about your "amazing" skills!"

Tian Jiyun felt humiliated and said softly to Yu Peiyu:"You're about to lose anyway. Give up now and I won't harm you."

Yu Peiyu said with indignation:"Give up?"

Tian Jiyun said softly:"Give up and I won't harm you. I'll even make sure you can leave this temple safely."

Yu Peiyu smiled and attacked viciously with his fist. That was his answer!

Tian Jiyun softly cursed:"You idiot! I won't let you off this easily."

They exchanged another 10 stances, Tian Jiyun wanted to win within 300 stances. He whistled loudly now and leapt up, his body was moving rapidly mid-air and was crashing down on Yu Peiyu like a fierce dragon.

This was an unique technique of the Divine Dragon Swordsman, The Three Stances Of The Startled Dragon Depraving Life.

It is said that the fierceness of these stances are unparalleled in the entire realm. The Divine Dragon Swordsman gave these stances the name startled dragon, because when a dragon is startled his temper and rage cannot be controlled.

But there is a big disadvantage to this attack, if the attacker fails to knock down the adversary he/she will fall into enemy hands easily. Because all your energy will be used up in this attack and you won't have the chance to take a deep breath to regenerate.

Tian Jiyun wanted to win desperately so he used this lethal stance.

But he was convinced that Yu Peiyu couldn't cope with this attack.

Yu Peiyu saw a dozen Tian Jiyuns crashing down on him, he couldn't tell who was the real Tian Jiyun. He was too elusive. And the force emitted from Tian Jiyun was enormous, if Yu Peiyu would forcibly receive this blow with his own palms his hands would be broken.

Before he knew it, the palms of Tian Jiyun were about to hit Yu Peiyu on the head.

All the people present held their breaths.

Yu Fanghe exclaimed:"Very formidable! No wonder there is a saying in Wulin: If the startled dragon appears, you will die without regrets."

But when Yu Fanghe finished his sentence a figure was hit backwards into the air. It was not Yu Peiyu but Tian Jiyun. Everyone was shocked and didn't anticipate this change and no one saw clearly what happened.

Could it be that Feng San had mastered some technique that could overcome The Three Stances Of The Startled Dragon Depraving Life? Did he impart that skill to this young man?

But Yu Peiyu was about to be killed, how is this possible?

Tian Jiyun bumped against a tree with his back and looked at the old Taoist priest and stuttered:"You....you....."
Before he could finish he coughed up blood and fainted.

Everyone looked at the old Taoist.

He looked back at them and shouted angrily:"What are you looking at? Do you think it was I that saved the life of this Yu child! I have never ambushed a man before in my life! And I will certainly not ambush a little braggart like Tian Jiyun!"
He put his hands into his sleeves, everyone looked at Yu Peiyu again.

Yu Peiyu stood there flabbergasted, it seems he didn't know who helped him either.

The old Taoist sneered:"A bunch of idiots! Can't you even see who helped that boy!"

He turned around and walked into the back of the temple.

Everyone felt embarrassed and Yu Peiyu had already left.

Lin Shoujuan looked at Yu Fanghe and said:"Chancellor....."

Yu Fanghe smiled:"Let him go. Because tonight....."

Lin Shoujuan helped Tian Jiyun up and smiled too. He said softly to himself: "He cannot escape tonight....."

Yu Peiyu was speeding away from the temple, during his fight with Tian Jiyun he noticed that something flew against Tian Jiyun's chest. And it wasn't the old Taoist who helped him. He was sure of that.

But who was it that helped him?

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply, and suddenly a short figure stood in front of him and laughed: "You defeated the son of old Seven Tian. Do you really think you can go just like that!"

It was the hot-tempered old Taoist.

Yu Peiyu paced back with one step and said: "Reverend, did you see who aided me earlier?"

The Taoist looked at him and said: "Who was it?"

Yu Peiyu said respectfully: "I was hoping reverend could tell me."

The Taoist angrily said: "You don't even know who helped you!"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Reverend, even with your eyesight you couldn't see who helped. How can I?"

The Taoist angrily said: "Are you implying that there is something wrong with my eyes? I don't pay attention to men who sneak around!"

And he pulled Yu Peiyu's robe and said: "Was it Feng San?"

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "Mr. Feng is not a man to behave furtively."

The Taoist said: "If it wasn't Feng San who was it? This man used a piece of tree-bark to strike down the son of Old Seven Tian. With the exception of Feng San and I, who has such internal strength."

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "I really don't know, reverend."

The Taoist let Yu Peiyu go and said:"No matter what, little Tian was defeated during his battle with you. Old Tian is bound to look for you. The seven brothers of the Tian family, well the first six are hardly a threat. But the seventh brother is a different matter. You can't escape from him."

Yu Peiyu said:"I'm not planning on escaping."

The Taoist scoffed:"Are you planning on defeating him?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I'm not intending to fight him either."

The Taoist looked at him and said:"You're not willing to fight and flee. What do you want to do? Reason with him?"

Yu Peiyu remained silent for a minute and replied:"I will see what I will have to do when I face him. There is no need to worry about what might happen."

The Taoist laughed:"Good! You talk like an old wise man with your young age.....If you don't have an idea, I do have an idea."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Please tell me, reverend."

The old Taoist said:"Become my student, I can promise you nobody in this world will dare to trouble you."

Yu Peiyu was surprised and repeated:"Reverend, become your pupil?"

The Taoist said loudly:"Don't think I accept all and sundry to be my disciples. But I think you are quite a good child and I like your temper. When little Tian was threatening you, you didn't cave in."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"Reverend, so you heard everything."

The Taoist said:"If I didn't hear those words and saw your reply. (*Humph) I wouldn't accept you to be my student if you would kowtow a thousand times to me now."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply and said:"Reverend, I thank you for your good intentions. But I am an unfortunate man, I cannot become your student."

The Taoist angrily roared:"What!"

Yu Peiyu lowered his head and didn't say anything, the Taoist asked loudly: "Are you sure?"

Yu Peiyu still remained silent, the Taoist used his fist to knock down a big tree. The tree flew a few metres away.

When Yu Peiyu looked up, the Taoist was gone.

Yu Peiyu sighed, suddenly a young voice sighed too: "It's a shame, it's a shame....."

Yu Peiyu saw a young beggar coming out of the woods, it was Hong Lianhua.

Hong Lianhua looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Do you recognize me."

Yu Peiyu wanted to reveal everything to him, all his secrets. But he couldn't and sighed deeply in his heart. He said: "Who doesn't know the famous master Hong Lian."

It seemed that Hong Lianhua sighed too but he replied with a laugh: "Do you know who that reverend was?"

Yu Peiyu asked: "Who is he?"

Hong Lianhua smiled: "Perhaps you're a bit too young and haven't heard of him. He is master Nu (anger) of....."

Yu Peiyu interrupted him: "Master Nu?!? He is master Nu of Mount Qingcheng?"

Hong Lianhua smiled: "Who else has such a high level in martial arts? And only master Nu has such a hot-temper."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I know he is one of the Ten Greatest Martial Arts Masters of this era. He is even....."

He didn't finish his sentence and was looking at Hong Lianhua.

Hong Lianhua finished the sentence for him: "Now you know that so-called experts like us are nothing compared to true experts like master Nu."

He continued: "It is said that master Nu's internal power has reached an incredible high level. Practically unparalleled in

the entire realm of martial arts. He has a very strange personality and dislikes almost everyone. It was very fortunate for you that he liked you, it is a shame that you passed out on the chance to become his student. Even I feel you missed out on a great opportunity."

Yu Peiyu didn't know what to say to this and stayed silent after some time he smiled:"Master Hong Lian, is there something you want to tell me now?"

Hong Lianhua said:"There is something I was meaning to ask you."

Yu Peiyu said:"Ask away."

Hong Lianhua looked sharp at Yu Peiyu and asked:"Why does Miss Lin Daiyu want to kill you?"

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly:"Did.....didn't she tell you?"

Hong Lianhua said:"I did not ask her."

Yu Peiyu said:"But why are you asking me?"

Hong Lianhua said sternly:"Some questions are not appropriate for women to answer. Men should take responsibility for their actions."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Perhaps like master Hong Lian it is possible, you have no worries and troubles. But some people have their reasons."

Hong Lianhua said:"Do you have a reason?"

Yu Peiyu said with a sad smile:"I cannot tell you."

Hong Lianhua looked at him and sighed:"It is a pity you choose to be friends with evildoers."

Yu Peiyu said:"But I feel sorry for you too, master Hong Lian. You're a famous young hero and the leader of the heroic Beggars Association. Why join a punitive expedition like this? Bullying a poor young orphan girl and an old sick man."

Hong Lianhua laughed loudly:"Poor young orphan girl?"

He turned to Yu Peiyu looking very earnest and said:"Do you know the reason why we are here?"

Yu Peiyu said:"I would like to know."

Hong Lianhua said:"For the last few years about 20 men have mysteriously disappeared. All these people lived in different places in China, north, south, east and west. But they all shared one combined similarity. Do you know what?"

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said:"No, I don't."

Hong Lianhua said:"The only similarity is that they all came to the Family Li Village. And nothing was heard from them ever since."

Hong Lianhua said:"Some time ago three close relatives of a few of those missing men went to this town to look for their missing relatives. The three of them were intelligent men and had good martial arts."

Yu Peiyu asked:"What did they find out?"

Hong Lianhua said:"We don't know, all we know is that they were gone too after they came to this place. Anyway the relatives of the missing 20 men came to Yu Fanghe for help. Unfortunately the son of Yu Fanghe just died so I had to take over this affair. I sent a group of beggars to this town and instructed them to beg at each house in this village for food or money. After some investigation work they found nothing suspicious about the townspeople here with the exception of the old sick man and the strange, pretty young girl. The old man and young girl became their targets and they observed their house for some time. The girl must have noticed them after awhile and one particular morning the pouches of the observing disciples were gone. The disciples were shocked because the beggars of our association treasure these pouches as much as their lives perhaps even more than their lives. And if the thief could steal the pouches without being caught he/she could have killed them as well. The theft meant as a warning to tell us not to interfere here."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"However master Hong Lian is a famous meddler. Is that why there are so many disciples of your association here?"

Hong Lianhua smiled too and said:"There is another reason why we were here. We have noticed that a missing traitor of our association was seen in Sichuan province too. We rushed over here to find and to punish him."

Yu Peiyu remained silent and after awhile asked:"So chancellor Yu is certain that those vanishings of those men are connected to that young girl?"

Hong Lianhua said:"Indeed. After chancellor Yu heard our report he invited about 20 martial arts expert and came to this place under the pretext of playing go with old Mr. Tang. But in fact they were here to observe the house of that young girl and the old man. After some careful deduction we concluded that this young girl could be very well be the daughter of Zhu Mei and the old man is Feng San."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"What a strange story! And I thought I knew all the details to this incident."

Hong Lianhua said sternly:"Take my advice and leave now! Because if not you will probably perish along with them tonight."

Yu Peiyu looked pensive and said:"Master Hong Lian, things aren't as simple as they seem....."

Hong Lianhua said sternly:"This is all I have to say, it is up to you whether you will listen to my advice."

Hong Lianhua turned around and quickly went back to the Taoist temple.

Yu Peiyu sighed and decided to go back too, after walking for a few metres he heard a strange panting noise. And when he followed the sound he saw an old lady sitting on a rock coughing heavily. The old woman looked very ill and wore a thick robe and had a thick blanket wrapped around her too."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Can I help you? Do you live here?"

The old woman said weakly:"Yes....yes....."

Yu Peiyu asked friendly:"Why are you out here alone? Don't you have anyone who takes care of you?"

The old woman wept:"Young master, you must be joking. I don't have friends or relatives. Nobody pays any attention to me, they find me old and smelly. People won't even talk to me. Only my little kitten keeps my company. But those men won't let me take my kitten with me. She must be starving now. I must see her."

Yu Peiyu said:"You're going back to feed your cat?"

The old woman sobbed:"To young people she is just an ordinary cat but to me she is everything. Floret, mummy is coming home to feed you. Don't be afraid, Floret."

Yu Peiyu felt sorry for the old woman and saw she could hardly walk anymore. So he said very friendly to her:"If you don't mind I will carry you on my back and I will take you back to your home."

The old woman was very happy and asked:"Are you really willing to....."

Yu Peiyu said respectfully:"If my grandmother was still alive I know she will love her pets very much too."

The old woman laughed very happily and on their way back to her house she kept praising Yu Peiyu. She said that he was a very good boy and his future bride can consider herself very lucky. Yu Peiyu blushed.

When they entered the town, Yu Peiyu asked:"Where do you live?"

The old woman said:"It's very easy to find my house, my house is there..... next to the inn....."

Yu Peiyu immediately felt something was wrong and the old woman's legs were like a pair of pincers and Yu Peiyu couldn't throw her off his back anymore.

He remained calm and asked:"What do you want?"

The old woman laughed:"I just want to go home to visit my grandson and my great granddaughter."

Yu Peiyu said coldly:"If you have any resolved issues with Mr. Feng and Miss Zhu, you could go and look for them yourself. Why all the charades?"

The old woman laughed:"Dear boy, I'm old my legs are always the first ones to go. It's been awhile since I met a friendly nice boy like you. Now, be good now and take me upstairs to my grandson. I hope you will tell my grandson that I'm ill and need him to take care of me. And please tell him that you just found me and couldn't see an old poor woman die on the streets. Do you understand?"

Yu Peiyu said calmly:"And then what?"

The old woman smiled:"That isn't your concern anymore."

Yu Peiyu thought:Of course she won't have any use to me anymore when she is upstairs.

The old woman smiled:"Young boy, although I'm old and feeble. But I am still strong enough to give your neck a good message if you're not obedient."

Yu Peiyu sighed:"Old Madame, I really respect you for your story about your kitten Floret. I didn't suspect a thing. The rest is.....(*humph)."

Yu Peiyu entered the house and slowly walked upstairs. Guo Pianxian was sitting there looking pensive and Zhong Jing was asleep in his arms. Silver Blossom sat on the floor looking very pale and sickly, she didn't seem like her usual self anymore. The old man, Feng San had a bit of colour in his cheeks again and Zhu Lei'Er looked happy.

Yu Peiyu said loudly:"I found an old Madame outside the town, she is ill and need to see a doctor. And I couldn't leave her to die on the streets."

Guo Pianxian frowned, Silver Blossom was sitting there and looked tired and indifferent.

Feng San was still resting, Zhu Lei' Er walked over and asked: "Old Madame, are you feeling ill? Let me take a look....."

Suddenly Zhu Lei' Er backed away from Yu Peiyu and the old woman, she turned pale and looked like she just saw a ghost.

The old woman said weakly: "Miss, please take my pulse. I feel so weak, help me."

Zhu Lei' Er stuttered: "Granny Hu.....granny Hu.....You're granny Hu....."

When Guo Pianxian heard the name [granny Hu] he wanted to storm out of here at once.

Yu Peiyu was very much afraid but because his father had told him that the most evil woman in this world was granny Hu.

Granny Hu was one of the ten Greatest Martial Arts Masters of this time too.

Granny Hu sighed: "If I knew the little lass would recognize me I wouldn't have to go through all that trouble!"

She turned to Zhu Lei' Er and said: "Come here little girl and tell me how you recognized granny? I will buy you sweets."

Zhu Lei' Er retreated to Feng San and said frantically: "Third uncle, she isn't dead. Granny Hu is alive...."

Feng San still had his eyes closed and said: "She isn't granny Hu."

Zhu Lei' Er stuttered: "She is wearing....the same clothes.....Her hair is the same like all those years ago.....Even her.....shoe...shoes."

Feng San coldly said: "She is not granny Hu. Granny Hu is dead."

Zhu Lei' Er stuttered: "But...but...she is here....she came back from the grave....."

Feng San said sternly:"Anyone who has been hit by my Bone Deliquescent Pellet cannot be revived. Even becoming a spirit might not be possible!"

The old woman, granny Hu laughed arrogantly.

Her laughter sounded awfully eerie and everyone with exception of Feng San got goosebumps.

She laughed loudly:"No wonder I couldn't find my thieving sister. She really died at the hands of Feng San. Good! She has lived enough anyway.....But with her dead I am all alone with no relatives anymore. How can I live anymore?" She started to cry loudly.

Feng San opened his eyes and looked fiercely at granny Hu and asked:"You're the sister of granny Hu?"

Granny Hu said:"She is me, and I am her. She is granny Hu, I am granny Hu too. The two of us were always one."

Guo Pianxian thought:They're twin sisters, no wonder! That's why granny Hu's whereabouts were a mystery. Sometimes martial arts experts would see a granny Hu in the south but two days later she is said to be wandering in the western regions of China."

Granny Hu cried:"You old fiend, you killed my sister! You might as well kill me too."

Feng San said calmly:"You want to die? Is that the reason why you came here? If that is really what you desire come over here and I will send you to your sister."

Granny Hu yelled:"Listen everyone! Did you hear that? He killed my sister now he wants to kill me too."

Feng San said coldly:"If you want to live, LEAVE!"

Granny Hu said:"I'll leave, I can't kill you so I will have to leave."

Yu Peiyu was worried, because he knew if she would leave he had to carry her out of here. Probably he will be killed as soon as she leaves the house.

But granny Hu used her foot to kick Yu Peiyu in the stomach, making him dash forward. She grabbed his arms and used his arms to push out towards Feng San.

She wanted to use Yu Peiyu's hands to kill her enemy.

Granny Hu calculated that Feng San couldn't move and she used Yu Peiyu as her weapon. If Yu could kill Feng San, which would be excellent. She will simply kill Yu Peiyu when Feng San is dead. But if he failed and Feng San counter-attacked the only person to be killed would be Yu Peiyu. And she could quickly get off his back and escape.

Either way Yu Peiyu is bound to get killed, or is it?

Zhu Lei' Er shrieked, Feng San raised his palm and used his palm to receive the blow of Yu Peiyu. Yu Peiyu felt a strong powerful energy coming through the palm of Feng San. Suddenly that strong energy was gone, but energy was flowing out of granny Hu's palms. Her energy travelled through Yu Peiyu's palms and into Feng San.

Yu Peiyu understood what Feng San did. He used Yu Peiyu as bridge to absorb the internal strength of granny Hu.

Granny Hu begged:"Feng San.....old Mr. Feng.....Please spare me!.....old Master Feng.....have mercy on an old woman....."

Feng San said slowly:"I do not take the internal strength of other people that casually. However I do want to take your life."

Granny Hu begged:"Have mercy! Please spare an old woman."

Yu Peiyu was surprised and happy, Guo Pianxian was stunned that the infamous granny Hu was begging for her life.

Granny Hu bit her own hands and straightened her legs. A strong force suddenly send her flying of Yu Peiyu's back. She hit the ceiling and fell heavily down on the floor again. She was panting and coughing, but didn't get up. She quickly

composed herself and kowtowed to Feng San and begged:"I know my mistakes now, please spare me."

Feng San said calmly:"Not bad of you! Few can escape from my hands. Go!"

He turned to Yu Peiyu and smiled:"You gained quite a bargain."

Yu Peiyu was still a bit woozy, that sudden surge of energy was quite overwhelming.

Zhu Lei' Er smiled:"A large portion of granny Hu's internal energy has stayed in your body."

Yu Peiyu was a bit bemused by this situation, he suddenly gained extra internal energy. But it was still "taken" from somebody else and Yu Peiyu didn't feel to comfortable about that.

Granny Hu staggered to the stairs with difficulty and was secretly giving Yu Peiyu and Feng San a mean look.

Feng San called:"Wait!"

Granny Hu stopped and respectfully said:"Mr. Feng, what can I do for you?"

Feng San said:"I hardly interfere with affairs of Wulin anymore. And if you leave now you'll think that I killed your sister for no reason."

Granny Hu lowered her head and said:"I wouldn't dare."

Feng San said:"I will tell you why I had to kill her."

Granny Hu said:"Thank you for telling me." But she hoped he would hurry up so she can leave this awful place.

Zhu Lei' Er said:"Third uncle, rest for awhile. I will tell the story."

Feng San asked:"Do you still remember what happened that night?"

Zhu Lei' Er said resolutely:"Although I was very young, I will never forget what happened that night."

Everyone knew that night was the night she lost her parents. Zhu Lei' Er looked granny Hu and asked:" Do you know who I am?"

Granny Hu said:" Miss Zhu is the daughter of Lady Zhu."

She gave her a cold look and said:" That night my mother was making a new dress for me. She was embroidering a Chinese unicorn on my dress and told me that she hoped that soon I would have a little brother."

Zhu Lei' Er's face looked happy, the memory of her late mother made her look sweet and innocent.

She continued:" I was very happy and I wanted to put on the dress immediately. So I couldn't sleep and stayed at the side of my mother."

Granny Hu smiled:" The dress made by Lady Zhu must be beautiful."

Zhu Lei' Er said:" My mother did everything in the house, cooking, cleaning, She was the perfect wife and mother."

Granny Hu said:" But of course."

Zhu Lei' Er said:" During that night my mother felt very restless. She felt something was amiss and couldn't focus on embroidering. Suddenly a few crows flew up and made a horrible shriek. I quickly ran to my mother's arms. She stood up and threw her needles towards the noise."

Granny Hu said:" Those crows must have been startled by unwanted visitors. Lady Zhu is a skilled expert and immediately counter-attacked. I wonder who the idiot was that stood outside the window."

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly:" It was your sister, granny Hu."

Granny Hu swallowed and said:" Oh.....was it?"

Zhu Lei' Er said:" My mother saw that her needles were being caught by the adversary easily. She knew that the attackers were experts. She wanted to wake my father....."

She took a deep breath and continued:" My mother woke

Dongfang Meiyu and wanted him to take me to safety. But suddenly my mother's face changed. She looked very pale and afraid. Dongfang Meiyu on the other hand was exhilarated to see the attackers."

Yu Peiyu thought: That Dongfang Meiyu is a piece of scum. Not surprising that Miss Zhu doesn't see him as her father anymore.

Zhu Lei' Er said: "At that time a voice outside said [Very good, The Silver Needles And Flying Petals Over The Sky technique! However it is a shame that granny isn't afraid of this skill.] Needless to say it was granny Hu."

Everyone here looked at this granny Hu, granny Hu laughed dryly: "How old were you at the time, Miss Zhu?"

Zhu Lei' Er said: "I was very young. I was seven at the time."

Granny Hu smiled: "Amazing that a seven year old girl can remember the words of others that clearly."

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly: "Some people are still muddle-headed fools when they are seventy or eighty years old and others are smart when they're just children."

She looked at granny Hu and said: "Furthermore if someone would kill your mother when you're seven. You will remember everything thing those murderers did and said too."

Granny Hu shivered when she saw Zhu Lei' Er cold look and laughed dryly: "That sister of mine is a muddle-headed busybody."

Zhu Lei' Er grunted and continued: "My mother said that there were no animosities between her and granny Hu. And she questioned the motives of Granny Hu. At this point another 20 men entered the house, the doors were opened and they surrounded my mother."

Granny Hu sighed: "So about 20 experts were standing in your house?"

Zhu Lei' Er said:"They surrounded my mother and blocked all the doors."

Granny Hu asked:"How did these people look like?"

Zhu Lei' Er said:"The leader of this group was an elderly man. He looked very distinguished and wore a expensive brocade. His beard was long and refined, very similar to Taoist immortals in portraits. But....but he was the most despicable of all."

Granny Hu said:"That must be lord Dongfang of the Nocturne City."

The second one was a tall man, looking robust and had a big beard. He had a strange weapon, a mace that resembled a pagoda."

Granny Hu exclaimed:"Heavenly King Li."

Zhu Lei' Er said coldly:"The third one was an old woman with white hair and looked like a friendly old woman. But her heart was rotten to the core."

Everyone knew that must be the twin sister of this granny Hu, granny Hu.

Granny Hu smiled dryly:"Well said! If I was there I would have scolded her myself."

Zhu Lei' Er continued:"When my mother saw them she was shocked, but remained calm and asked them what they wanted."

Granny Hu said:"Although these experts were formidable, but Lady Zhu shouldn't be afraid of them. They are hardly a threat to her."

Zhu Lei' Er said:"That Dongfang Daming started yelling at my mother for abducting his son, his words were very nasty. But my mother didn't retort back because this Dongfang Daming was her father-in-law. She waited till he was finished and thought Dongfang Meiyu would explain this matter to his father. However Dongfang Meiyu quickly walked to his

father and turned around and started cursing my mother too. His words were even more horrible than Dongfang Daming."

Granny Hu sighed:"Men are such heartless creatures."

Zhong Jing who was awake for some time now started to weep.

Zhu Lei' Er had tears in her eyes too and continued:"At that time my mother saw what kind of man Dongfang Meiyu was. Her heart was broken and didn't say anything else. She just begged Dongfang Meiyu and Dongfang Daming to take care of me."

Zhu Lei' Er stopped for a minute to wipe her tears.

Even Silver Blossom was crying. Everyone was saddened by this story and lowered their heads.

After some time Zhu Lei' Er resumed her story:"Dongfang Meiyu immediately said he would take good care of me. Because I was his.....daughter too. My mother took out a sword and was planning to commit suicide. I knew something was wrong and was very afraid. So I started crying loudly, but my mother didn't look at me and was about to slit her throat."

Everyone shrieked for a moment, because they knew there was something else to it.

Zhu Lei' Er said:"At this moment granny Hu took swiftly moved to my mothers' side and took away the sword from my mother."

Granny Hu said:"Although my sister is a fool and a busybody but she is quite benevolent."

Zhu Lei' Er grunted.

Chapter 20 : A Blast From The Past

“Those two are really ignorant and stupid, haven’t they heard of Under the entire sky only the phoenix in the southern provinces is mighty, when he cries heaven and earth will shake on its’ foundations.”

Zhu Lei’Er continued telling this tragedy: “All these years my mother did her best in becoming a perfect wife and mother. Although her martial arts didn’t decline but she didn’t improve either.”

Yu Peiyu sighed: “Not improving is the same as declining really, everyone else will continue their training and cultivation. Whereas you will remain stuck at the same level of all those years ago.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “At the most critical moment a figure dashed through the roof. The figure looked like a descending phoenix and in an instant this figure stood in front of my mother. Even I at that time knew that this person was superior to my mother.”

Everyone thought: That must be Feng San.

Zhu Lei’Er said: “My mother was shocked to see a man suddenly standing in front of her. She raised her palm and attacked but that man casually diverted her palm.”

She turned around and asked everyone: “Do you know who that figure was?”

Everyone nodded, because their suspicions were confirmed it was Feng San.

Zhu Lei’Er had a gentle smile on her face and said: “My third uncle wore a white brocade that night. It made him look like an immortal descending from heaven.”

Granny Hu said: "I have admired and heard of the grace of Mr. Feng too for many years."

Zhu Lei'Er continued: "All those 20 odd experts were shocked, all of them thought they didn't have such martial arts as this man. Dongfang Daming was the first to ask [Who are you, sir?]."

Granny Hu said: "Dongfang Daming lived far away from the central plains. So he isn't really that afraid of Mr. Feng. But Heavenly King Li and my sister are familiar with the fame and abilities of Mr. Feng. They must have guessed who Mr. Feng really was, only the famous Feng San had such amazing skills."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "At that time my mother and carried me and quickly left the house and when she heard granny Hu call out my third uncle's name she stopped running. She went back to the house and knew third uncle could clear her name and help her."

Feng San sighed deeply: "But....I....wasn't....."

Zhu Lei'Er wept: "It isn't your fault third uncle."

Feng San said to her: "Carry on."

Zhu Lei'Er composed herself and said: "My third uncle explained what happened, about the letter the merchant, etc. He scolded Dongfang Meiyu fiercely and everyone remained silent."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Even if they didn't believe the explanation they wouldn't dare to raise objections."

Zhu Lei'Er continued: "That Heavenly King Li was an arrogant and proud man and Dongfang Daming had heard of my third uncle's reputation a few times. Both of them thought that they had my third uncle outnumbered and shouldn't be afraid. They looked at each other and nodded. Both of them suddenly launched an attack on my uncle."

Granny Hu sighed: "Those two are really ignorant and stupid, haven't they heard of Under the entire sky only the

phoenix in the southern provinces is mighty, when he cries heaven and earth will shake on its' foundations."

Yu Peiyu had never heard of this saying before and was wondering whether granny Hu was sucking up again. Nonetheless he was filled with admiration and respect to Feng San.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I saw them attacking and saw that Heavenly King Li raised his heavy pagoda shaped mace and aimed for third uncle's head and that Dongfang Daming took out his pair of sun and moon wheels and attacked from the side. The powerful force released from the mace was very strong even I could feel it. And my mother and I were standing about 10 metres away from them. I was very afraid and started to cry again."

Everyone was very anxious now and Zhu Lei'Er said: "My uncle whistled very loudly it was not unpleasant. In fact it sounded very melodic."

Granny Hu said enthusiastically: "That is called The Whistle Of The Phoenix can be heard through a thousand miles. Its' Resonance Is As Clear As The White Clouds. When The Phoenix Is Heard, Demons And Goblins Will All Perish. A famous saying when Mr. Feng roamed the realm."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "My uncle quickly disarmed the Heavenly King Li, and struck him aside and easily bent his iron mace."

Everyone was most impressed by this ability, when they heard Zhu Lei'Er saying what Feng San did.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "When Dongfang Daming saw that my uncle disarmed and defeated Heavenly King Li with one stance he was afraid. He quickly retreated back and stood still. My uncle scoffed: [I will spare because of your daughter-in-law.] And he casually threw the mace through the window mace struck a tree down a tree metres away. At that point no one dare to attack anymore."

All of them felt relieved but wondered how Zhu Mei died in the end, and how was Feng San injured.

It was dusk now.

Yu Peiyu asked: "What lead to the terrible change of events, Miss Zhu?"

Zhu Lei'Er helped Feng San to a cup of tea first and said: "My mother thanked my uncle for his help and kowtowed to him. My uncle asked my mother how she wanted to punish Dongfang Meiyu."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Lady Zhu still loved him, right? And didn't want to see Dongfang Meiyu hurt, did she?"

Zhu Lei'Er sadly nodded and said: "Women are always too sentimental for their own good."

Guo Pianxian smiled: "Some can be very ruthless, too ruthless."

Zhu Lei'Er looked pensive and continued sadly: "My mother cried sadly when she heard my uncle's question. My uncle asked her whether she wanted Dongfang Meiyu dead. My mother cried even harder and shook her head. My uncle asked her whether she wanted Dongfang Meiyu to leave now. But my mother shook her head again."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What did Lady Zhu want?"

Zhu Lei'Er said softly: "She....she.....she..."

Feng San said: "Rest now. I will finish the story."

Zhu Lei'Er wiped her tears and nodded.

Feng San said: "At that time I was very confused, suddenly that granny Hu asked if Zhu Mei wanted to reconcile with Dongfang Meiyu."

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly: "Only women will understand women."

Feng San said: "Before I could say anything else, granny Hu asked Zhu Mei again whether reconciliation is what she

wanted. I was very angry and said that was impossible, Dongfang Meiyu couldn't be forgiven for his deeds. But Zhu Mei sobbed again and granny Hu turned to me and said: [Master Feng, you can see for yourself what Lady Zhu wants?] So I asked Zhu Mei again but she didn't say yes or no."

Silver Blossom said: "Silence gives consent."

Feng San said: "I was very confused but if that's what Zhu Mei wanted I couldn't object. But I did feel that Dongfang Meiyu got out of this too easy."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply.

Feng San said: "All those people saw that I had no objections anymore were relieved. Dongfang Daming and Dongfang Meiyu both apologized to Zhu Mei."

Yu Peiyu asked: "How did Dongfang Meiyu act?"

Feng San said: "He looked very remorseful of course, Zhu Mei was still looking a bit angry in the beginning, but after awhile the anger was gone too. Granny Hu was mediating between them. Granny Hu also came up with another idea."

Yu Peiyu frowned and asked: "What kind of idea?"

Feng San said: "Granny Hu felt that Zhu Mei and Dongfang Meiyu should have a proper wedding ceremony. Before they got married without consent from Dongfang Daming. Now they could officially get married and those experts and I would be the guests."

Granny Hu laughed: "That is a good idea."

Feng San said coldly: "I thought the same thing, we organized the ceremony in this house and were about to toast the newly-weds."

Yu Peiyu exclaimed with surprise: "A toast?"

Feng San nodded and said: "A toast."

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "There was something wrong with the wine, wasn't there?"

Feng San sighed: "Even a young man has such insight. I was too negligent and stupid."

Yu Peiyu thought: Master Feng was very confident about his own martial arts and thought no one could or dared to use this kind of trick on him.

Of course he didn't say that, but Feng San said: "You must think that I was too confident about my martial arts and didn't anticipate a trap. But you weren't there at the time, everyone was happy and glad. You wouldn't have suspected a thing."

Yu Peiyu said: "But if they were planning something against you, they will conceal their true faces and intentions."

Feng San remained silent. Yu Peiyu has become more vigilant and cautious over these few months. His mysterious adversary is a very intelligent fiend so in these few months he learnt to become extra careful.

Feng San on the other hand relied on his practically invincible martial arts to roam the realm. He had never suffered a terrible defeat before and was therefore too confident and not as cautious as Yu Peiyu.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "There were several reasons, my uncle knew that these people were famous orthodox martial arts experts and wouldn't resort to low tricks like using poison."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "If those so-called orthodox martial arts experts resorted to evil trickery. They are more vicious and dangerous than any heretic experts."

Zhu Lei'Er remained silent for a moment and said: "Secondly, with my third uncle's internal energy he isn't afraid of poisonous wine. Furthermore everyone drank from the same bottles."

Guo Pianxian looked at granny Hu and said: "Normal poison wouldn't harm master Feng, but granny Hu is one of the top venom users in the realm. Even master Feng might not be able to withstand that type of poison."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Afterwards my third uncle knew that they didn't put venom in the wine, but smeared a thin layer of poison on the inside of the cups of my uncle and mother."

Yu Peiyu asked: "But when wine and poison are mixed together. The flavour tastes differently, didn't master Feng noticed something strange about it?"

Guo Pianxian asked: "Didn't Lady Zhu notice something odd about the wine? Lady Zhu is also an expert in using poison."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "Because the wine was cold and when the wine was poured into the first cup everyone toasted. So there was only a small portion that mixed with the wine."

Guo Pianxian said: "But..."

Zhu Lei'Er continued: "Afterwards the poison and the wine intermingled faster and faster. My third uncle and mother had finished several cups and they're a bit slow and woozy. At that time my mother was very happy and didn't suspect that they had poisoned her and third uncle."

Guo Pianxian sighed: "Granny Hu is really the matriarch of using poison."

Yu Peiyu who stood very close to granny Hu, made sure he stood very far away from her. His resentment and antipathy grew for this granny Hu. Zhong Jing didn't look at her anymore.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "After a few more cups, my mother walked to my third uncle and respectfully kowtowed to him and thanked him for his help."

Feng San sighed: "Although I felt it was a bit strange but I didn't really pay any more attention to it."

Zhu Mei walked to Dongfang Meiyu and took him by the hand and walked over to me and said: [Thank you everyone for being our guests. No matter what I'm most grateful.]

Dongfang Meiyu smiled: [I too am most grateful.]

Zhu Mei said: [It is said that husband and wife will stay together no matter what. Through and life and death, do you agree?]

I thought it was not very appropriate to say such unauspicious words. Dongfang Meiyu smiled: [You shouldn't say such words on a happy occasion.]

Zhu Mei smiled: [I just asked you whether you agree or not?]

Dongfang Meiyu was a bit taken by her strange words but managed to smile: [Of course I'm willing.]

After he finished Zhu Mei grabbed his hands and flung him heavily on the ground and breaking his arms.

Everyone was surprised and shocked to see this."

Yu Peiyu said sadly: "Lady Zhu must already know the poison had already entered her body. And couldn't be saved anymore. So she thanked master Feng for his help, didn't she?"

Silver Blossom sighed: "She planned to die and kill that heartless man first."

Feng San sighed: "At that time I didn't know what was going on and asked her what she was doing. Dongfang Daming and others were about to attack her. Zhu Mei picked Dongfang Meiyu up and took him by the neck and shouted: [Don't come closer! Or else I will kill him!] Dongfang Daming and his men backed away. Zhu Mei told me that she was severely poisoned and was beyond help. She asked me to take care of Lei'Er.

I secretly took a deep breath and found out I was poisoned too. The venom travelled very slow but when I took a deep breath it travelled very fast. My hands suddenly turned purple. Zhu Mei saw that I was poisoned too and my condition was even more serious than hers."

Everybody was very anxious, Zhu Lei'Er continued: "I sat there on a chair at that time eating a some pastry my

mother made. But when I saw what happened I dropped the pastry.

My third uncle whistled loudly, granny Hu's face changed and said: [This poison was compounded by lord Dongfang. He used 81 different kinds of poison to compound this poison, if you use force you will only die quicker.]

She quickly backed away from my third uncle."

Yu Peiyu said with surprise: "How come Dongfang Daming compounded this poison?"

Guo Pianxian smiled: "Granny Hu was afraid of master Feng that's why she tried to put the blame on Dongfang Daming."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "What an evil woman!"

Zhu Lei'Er continued: "She still underestimated my third uncle, my uncle used his powerful internal energy to surpress the poison and stormed towards Dongfang Daming. My mother quickly shouted: [It isn't Dongfang Daming but granny Hu, seize her and there might be an antidote.]

At that time Dongfang Daming and my third uncle had already exchanged three palms. As result Dongfang Daming's arms were broken and suffered a heavy blow on his chest. He fell down and vomited blood. The famous Dongfang Daming of the Sun and Moon island couldn't withstand three stances of my third uncle. The other experts wanted to run away as quickly as possible, they feared the wrath of my uncle.

But third uncle was furious and didn't give them the opportunity to escape and I could hear a series of screams and breaking of weapons. More than 20 martial arts experts were killed in matter of moments, and their blood splattered across this entire room."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What about granny Hu?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "She was still alive, my uncle only broke her legs and forced her to give the antidote."

Guo Pianxian said: "I'm afraid she doesn't have an antidote either. The venom she created was compounded from 81 different kinds of poison."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That's what my mother said to at that time, my mother asked her what the names were of those 81 kinds of poison she used. If we knew the names we could analyze it and compound our own antidote."

Guo Pianxian nodded and said: "Of course."

Yu Peiyu asked: "But....but didn't she reveal it?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "The old crone feared for her life and quickly started to tell us what type of venoms she used, but after only revealing two, someone shot a needle in her back. She was dead and we could hear Dongfang Daming laughing: [Although I cannot live anymore, Feng San! But you won't live any longer either! No one can save you now!]

Because he had strong internal strength he wasn't killed instantly when he received that blow from my uncle. And he saw an opportunity to kill granny Hu with his dying breath and prevented us to know the compound of the poison."

After she reached this point she remained silent again, this was what really happened, a true tragedy. Everyone felt sad and melancholic. They didn't know what to say and stayed quiet too.

After a long time granny Hu sighed: "I was wrong. I am so wrong...."

She got up and bowed to Feng San and said: "Master Feng, my sister wasn't killed by you. Furthermore.....furthermore she was responsible for your current illness, even if you did kill her I wouldn't resent you."

Everyone was surprised that she was able to speak such reasonable words.

Feng San said calmly: "Those who deserved to die are dead. Let bygones be bygones. You can go now."

Granny Hu said: "Thank you, master Feng. But Dongfang Daming was wrong too. He thought that no one in this world can provide an antidote for you. But he forgot about me."

Zhu Lei'Er happily said: "Of course, she must have an antidote for the poison her sister compounded."

Granny Hu smiled: "Miss Zhu, you're only right about one part, the poison was compounded by me. That's why my sister didn't have an antidote."

Everyone was glad to hear this good news, Zhu Lei'Er happily asked: "Do you have the antidote with you now?"

Granny Hu took out a small bottle out of her robe and said: "Here it is."

This was too sudden, Zhu Lei'Er looked at that little bottle and trembled.

Granny Hu sighed: "Originally I did not want to give you the antidote. But the grandeur and chivalry of master Feng has impressed a lot. I think it unfair if a great man like master Feng should suffer any longer."

Zhu Lei'Er said with a shaky voice: "I never thought you would have a conscience."

She took the little bottle and held it tightly. She was afraid someone would steal it away.

She said happily: "Third uncle, you....we....are saved. It is like we're waking up from a nightmare. Our nightmare is over."

Even Feng San was getting emotional too, there was finally hope of getting recovered. He didn't know what to say.

Zhu Lei'Er shed tears of happiness and Feng San gently touched her hair. He wanted to say something but didn't know what.

Granny Hu seemed to be touched too and said softly: "It pays to do good in life."

She wanted to turn around and walk downstairs. Yu Peiyu blocked her way and asked: "Is that really the antidote?"

Granny Hu smiled: "Young man, you're too paranoid. Have you met too many evil, treacherous men these days? Do I look like someone who wants to harm Feng San?"

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "I did meet too many evil and treacherous men and women recently. I even know that good man like master Feng could be injured too by evil tricks."

Guo Pianxian said: "Furthermore master Feng absorbed a large part of your internal energy. Why do you want to save him? I'm suspicious about your motives too."

Guo Pianxian suspected granny Hu's motives from the start she told them she had the antidote. But he didn't say anything, because it was not his concern. But seeing Yu Peiyu speak up his mind he thought he might as well do a good deed too.

Zhu Lei'Er was hesitating too and looked at granny Hu and asked: "Tell me! Is...is this really the antidote?"

Granny Hu sighed: "Miss, if you don't believe me give me back the bottle."

Zhu Lei'Er sternly said: "Not that easy! If this isn't the antidote I will kill you."

Granny Hu smiled wryly: "What does it take to convince you?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You will test the antidote first."

Yu Peiyu thought that granny Hu will eventually die at her own hands, but suddenly Guo Pianxian said: "If she had taken an antidote first, and when the pills in the bottle are really poisonous she won't be harmed."

Granny Hu sighed: "Nothing I do will please you. But fortunately I have a way to test the pills."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What kind of way?"

Granny Hu took out a little red box out of her robe and said: "In here was the poison my sister used to poison master Feng."

She took a small paper package out of the box in it was a red powdery substance. She put the substance in her mouth and swallowed it. Everyone was shocked, granny Hu said to Zhu Lei'Er: "If I'm not mistaken you're an expert in using poison too. I see it in your eyes."

Zhu Lei'Er grunted but praised this old woman in her heart for her sharp eyes.

Granny Hu asked: "Miss, you seem to be resilient to poison. May I ask how this is possible?"

Zhu Lei'Er thought for a moment and answered: "You're right. Because I had to find out what kind of poison was used on my uncle. So I sampled every type of known venom in the world and analysed its' features and symptoms. And tried to analyse and compound an antidote."

Granny Hu smiled: "If you don't overtake the amount, nothing will happen. And your body will slowly become immune to that type of poison."

Granny Hu sighed: "But not many people in the world have that kind of bravery and tenacity. Miss Zhu, you earn my respects."

Zhu Lei'Er didn't only earn the respects of granny Hu, even Yu Peiyu, Guo Pianxian, Zhong Jing and Silver Blossom respected the courage and tenacity of this young girl.

Zhu Lei'Er said casually: "There is nothing special to it. Most venoms are very sweet in fact."

Granny Hu laughed: "The most lethal venom is sweet and the best medicine tastes bitter."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Exactly."

Granny Hu said: "In my opinion the venoms you have sampled are not very rare. I can guarantee you that you are

not immune to the poison I have found or compounded.”

Zhu Lei’Er looked at her and was shocked, and everyone followed her look. They saw that granny Hu’s face turned purple. She looked very frightening.

Granny Hu said: “Miss Zhu, you can see whether my symptoms and features coincide with those of master Feng now.”

She started to shake and she couldn’t speak clearly now, the poison was beginning to take effect.

Zhu Lei’Er said: “It is similar.”

Feng San said: “Take the antidote, the poison is starting to take effect now.”

Granny Hu took a pill from the bottle she gave to Zhu Lei’Er. The smell was awful everyone could smell the foul air of it.

Granny Hu smiled: “I told you that the best medicine is sometimes very bitter.”

Zhong Jing sighed: “I’m beginning to believe that now.”

Granny Hu laughed: “Remember little girl! The sweet words of a man can be more dangerous than any venom in this world.”

Zhong Jing casually looked at Guo Pianxian. After some time granny Hu’s face turned back to normal. She asked: “Do you believe me now?”

Zhu Lei’Er lowered her head and said: “Please forgive for not believing you earlier, Madame Hu.”

Zhu Lei’Er didn’t suspect her anymore and took the antidote to Feng San. She felt a bit embarrassed for accusing her.

Granny Hu looked at Yu Peiyu and Guo Pianxian and asked: “May I go now?”

Yu Peiyu had still some doubts but the truth was that she gave the antidote. But he still felt something was amiss and

couldn't really put his finger on it. Nonetheless he said: "Please forgive me for being rude."

Granny Hu smiled and stared at Guo Pianxian. Guo Pianxian regretted for creating doubt and hoped she wouldn't resent him.

He smiled with difficulty: "Please forgive, Madame Hu. I....I...."

Granny Hu interrupted: "Don't be afraid! I won't blame you, I even admire your abilities. If you have the time, come and visit me some day."

She turned to Zhong Jing and said: "You won't be jealous of an old woman, will you?"

Guo Pianxian didn't know what to say and granny Hu had left the house.

Feng San had taken the antidote and Zhu Lei'Er kept asking what Yu Peiyu saw earlier when he delivered the message. She sounded very happy and sweet.

Yu Peiyu told them what he saw and did.

Feng San sat cross-legged and frowned: "It is master Nu they have asked. I heard that his internal energy is quite powerful, what do you think?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "No question about it he is very powerful."

Zhu Lei'Er said happily: "No matter in a short while third uncle will be allright again. He will easily defeat them all."

Yu Peiyu was silent for a moment and said: "Master Feng, although you're a very chivalrous hero but they have their rights of being here."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What rights do they have?"

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "It's about what Miss Zhu did here....."

Zhu Lei'Er leapt up and shouted: "They told you I'm responsible for those missing men, didn't they?"

Yu Peiyu said: "That is what they told me."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Did they also tell you why those men entered our house?"

Yu Peiyu said: "No, they didn't."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Some of those men came here because they wanted tobully me. And the others came here planning to rob us. They had evil intentions first and came to us. I think you wouldn't let those rogues go if you saw them."

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "Miss, you could be right. But still....."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "My uncle is ill because he tried to save people. I don't see anything wrong with absorbing the internal energies of rogues anyway."

Yu Peiyu didn't know what to say and in the end he sighed deeply: "It seems nothing in this world is that black and white."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "There is one disadvantage of absorbed energy, if disperses quicker the normal accumulated energy."

Guo Pianxian asked: "But if master Feng can force out the poison out of his body with internal power. Why all those strange creatures under his blanket?"

Zhu Lei'Er explained: "When my uncle uses his internal strength to force out the venomous cold qi out of his body, his pores will have the chance to breathe again. But by doing so the pores will breathe in the cold venomous qi again. After many months he finally discovered what went wrong. So he decided to use those venomous creatures to immediately absorb his cold qi, when his body rejects the cold qi."

Everyone was amazed about such a method.

Yu Peiyu said: "So both of you stayed here because it was not convenient for master Feng to travel anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "When my uncle killed Dongfang Daming and his entourage, he was too weak to do anything else anymore. If my uncle didn't have those Bone Deliquescent pellets we wouldn't know what to do with all those corpses."

Guo Pianxian asked: "Did you use the Bone Deliquescent pellets on those missing men too?"

Zhu Lei'Er sneered: "Actually those men were unworthy of those precious pellets. It was such a waste to use it on them. You should know that the Bone Deliquescent pellets are not easily made and it is an ancient formula that was written by a great master in medicine and poison."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Now everything falls into place, all my queries are answered."

Zhong Jing yelled: "Look at master Feng! He is in pain!"

Feng San was breathing heavily and his body trembled. But he took the antidote already what is wrong.

Zhu Lei'Er wept: "Third uncle, can you hear me?"

Feng San closed his eyes and his teeth clattered.

Zhu Lei'Er yelled: "You saw it too. It was the antidote, wasn't it? What is going on here?Can someone explain to me what is going on here?"

Silver Blossom suddenly said with a smile: "I know what happened."

Zhu Lei'Er rushed over to her and asked: "You know what happened?"

Silver Blossom nodded.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "How did granny Hu do it? Wasn't that the antidote in the bottle? Or were the poisonous pills and the antidote mixed in the same bottle? Or did she change the bottle when she gave it back to me? What was it?"

Silver Blossom said: "She gave you the antidote, she wouldn't dream of tricking you in front of so many people."

Zhu Lei'Er said anxiously: "Well, what is it?"

Silver Blossom sighed: "Using so many different types of venom to compound a new poison is not easy. The features and effects of every type of venom are different from each other. Blindly mixing venoms could result that the new poison may not be lethal at all. For instance mixing the colours yellow, orange, red, green, black, blue and purple you'll get white."

Guo Pianxian sighed: "Compounding new poisons isn't easy at all, that's why granny Hu is the leading expert on this field."

Silver Blossom continued: "If you're to compound a new poison consisting numerous venoms, you've to analyse very carefully how much of each you use. Because creating an antidote often relies on the percentage of ingredients you've used. After all these years master Feng has disturbed the amount of poison in his body, some of it has been forced out of his body via his internal energy. That's why the antidote of granny Hu is useless now, instead detoxifying the antidote has upset the forcibly set balance by master Feng. This is also the devious part of granny Hu."

Zhu Lei'Er grabbed her hand and said: "Why didn't you say something before?"

Silver Blossom smiled lightly: "Would you tell, if you were me."

Zhu Lei'Er didn't know what to do about her, Silver Blossom said: "Besides I could have thought about that just a moment ago."

Everyone thought about what Silver Blossom said and thought she was right. They all resented granny Hu for her evil tricks.

Feng San was sweating heavily and the poison which he forcibly suppressed all these years ago has come free.

Zhu Lei'Er was crying, Zhong Jing consoled: "Don't worry. Master Feng used his internal energy once to suppress the poison, he can do it again."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "You're right, but my uncle's internal strength isn't what is used to be."

Silver Blossom said casually: "Furthermore our enemies are about to arrive."

Although it seemed that Silver Blossom was concerned about Feng San, but everyone could hear her tone was filled with pleasure about the miserable situation of Feng San.

Zhu Lei'Er angrily said: "Why are you so happy? Don't forget if we're to die you will go with us."

Silver Blossom said coldly: "I don't care. Besides I have lost my martial arts anyway. I'm practically an invalid."

Everyone was very anxious at this time.

Guo Pianxian wasn't concerned about the health of Feng San, but Feng San was his backer now. If Feng San dies Guo Pianxian is also done for.

There are another four hours left now.

Yu Peiyu jumped and loudly said: "Miss Zhu, take care of Master Feng and get out of this town now....Everyone else should go too."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What about you?"

Yu Peiyu said: "It is obvious that they have surrounded the town, but with the combined strength of Miss Zhu and Guo Pianxian, you're able to escape. However I fear you must hurry because if master Nu is alarmed.....I will....."

Zhu Lei'Er interrupted: "You're staying here to stall them?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Although I'm no match for all of them but I can buy you some time. By the time they've defeated me, you should be long gone. We have no other choice now, we can't just sit here and be killed. Furthermore they might not even kill me."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "They're not after you? Why should you stay behind?"

Yu Peiyu said slowly: "Everyone is bound to defy death some time."

Silver Blossom scoffed: "I always thought you were a cautious man. But now you're about to commit one very stupid and rash move."

Yu Peiyu said slowly: "One is about to be rash and stupid once in his life."

Guo Pianxian smiled: "Every man has to do what he thinks is right! Brother Yu is truly a hero, we shouldn't discard his wishes."

Yu Peiyu said: "My mind is made up. You should go now!"

At this point Feng San opened his eyes and said loudly: "Do you think that I am a coward!"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I didn't imply that."

Feng San said sternly: "Life and death are concepts which humans can hardly grasp and understand. But a true man never fears death."

Yu Peiyu lowered his head and said: "I know and understand."

Feng San said: "That's why you want to stay behind, isn't it?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Indeed."

Feng San angrily said: "Allright! All of us will stay here and fight to our deaths. If we can manage to last for about an hour, we're very lucky."

Feng San asked Yu Peiyu: "Do you think we will lose?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "Master Feng is not able to fight at the moment, I think our chances of winning are very slim."

Feng San loudly said: "I'm not afraid to die, but I will not be humiliated by a group of rogues."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Third uncle, you cannot use your martial arts."

Feng San looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "I can absorb the energies of others, but I can also transfer my energy to someone else."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But if you lend your internal strength to someone else how will you surpress the poison?"

Feng San shouted: "I rather die of the poison than being captured by those thugs."

Guo Pianxian and Silver Blossom regained hope again, but thought Feng San's internal energy wasn't that abundant anymore. Even if he lend his internal energy to one of them they wouldn't be able to defeat all those experts and especially an expert like master Nu."

Zhong Jing suddenly asked: "Master Feng, why can't you use that portion of internal strength you have to fight those aggressors?"

Feng San smiled wryly: "The energy left in my body is sufficient to surpress the poison in my body. It flows slowly like the water in a stream or brook. But when use it to engage in combat the power I have unleash is similar to the eruption of a volcano within three stances the poison will take effect and I will die. I cannot defeat those rogues within three stances."

Zhong Jing said: "I don't know if I can help out, master Feng."

Feng San praised her: "Although I took away your internal power. It's very good and admirable of you to offer your help. But you're to weak at the moment to receive my internal strength, the force might even kill you."

He looked at Yu Peiyu now.

Zhong Jing stuttered: "Young master Yu, won't you....."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I want to help master Feng too, but I won't take advantage of the situation."

Zhong Jing loudly said: "But master Feng wants to give you his internal energy. It is not like you're stealing it away from him."

Yu Peiyu remained quiet for a moment and suddenly knelt down in front of Feng San and respectfully said: "Master Feng, would you accept me to be your disciple?"

Yu Peiyu is not only a very intelligent young man, but also very kind and considerate. If he became the pupil of Feng San, he can receive Feng San's internal power and fight on behalf of his teacher, Feng San. Furthermore he will protect the reputation of Feng San.

Feng San looked at him and said: "You're not willing to take advantage of the situation, but I'm not too keen on exploiting your kindness. Becoming my disciple....becoming my disciple....you're not doing this for yourself but doing this for me."

Yu Peiyu said: "But I..."

Feng San interrupted him: "If you would call me brother you'll make me most happy. Besides the relationship between two brothers is closer than of teacher and pupil. If I can see my brother fight on behalf of me I will die with no regrets."

At this point Zhu Lei'Er knelt down and called Yu Peiyu [uncle].

Yu Peiyu was very pleased when he heard Zhu Lei'Er call him uncle. Becoming the sworn brother of this magnificent hero is something to be proud of. But when he realised that the upcoming battle is going to be fierce and they're not permitted to lose, he felt worried again.

The weather changed, storm was approaching. The lights were out and Feng San sat on his bed with his eyes closed. He looked like he was dead.

Zhu Lei'Er was standing next to Feng San, she had a weird feeling that her time being together with her third uncle are soon to be gone.

Yu Peiyu sat too, he was slowly letting his body accept his new internal energy. A few hours ago he never thought he would have the chance of battling a martial arts expert like master Nu. Even if the chances of winning are slim, he is quite anxious and excited.

How many people in this world can fight master Nu?

The storm has come now, the wind was blowing fiercely. Branches were broken, doors and windows banged.

Guo Pianxian said suddenly: "THEY ARE HERE....."

A group of men and women carrying lamps moved towards the house.

A gentle voice said: "This lowly Taoist, Shiyun of the HeavenlyExcellenceTemple on MountQingcheng is here to deliver a card and to pay my respects."

Zhu Lei'Er asked softly: "Who is this Shiyun?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "He is the disciple of master Nu."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "(*Humph) The door is open. You can come up."

They heard someone walking up the stairs judging by his steps his martial arts were very good. His pace was slow, revealing he was a gentle person, but his steps were stable revealing his footwork was excellent.

They saw a young Taoist looking very handsome and friendly. Everyone was surprised to see that a hot-tempered man like master Nu would have such a gentle and friendly pupil.

Shiyun stood there respectfully, Zhu Lei'Er coldly said: "We're over here, don't stand there like an idiot."

Shiyun didn't say anything back to her, he just glanced at her and lowered his head. He slowly and respectfully said:

“Shiyun pays his respects to master Feng.”

Feng San said: “No need to be courteous.”

Shiyun held out a card and said: “The chancellor of Wulin, old master Yu and my teacher are outside. Would master Feng like to receive them?”

Zhu Lei’Er sneered: “If third uncle said no, they will barge in here anyway.”

Shiyun said: “I am just here to deliver this card, I’m not aware of the other issues.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “What do you know?”

Shiyun replied: “I do not know anything concerning this matter.”

Zhu Lei’Er scoffed: “Is the pupil of master Nu a good-for-nothing?”

Shiyun smiled: “My teacher’s only regret is not having a decent disciple.”

Shiyun’s answer was very good. He doesn’t get angry at any situation.

Zhu Lei’Er was taken by surprise by the good temper of this young Taoist. Feng San sighed: “Master Nu is very fortunate of having a good disciple like you.”

Shiyun bowed and said: “Thank you master Feng for your kind words. But I’m unworthy of them.”

Feng San said: “Please inform your teacher and Yu Fanghe I await them here.”

Shiyun’s hands formed a palm and said: “I will inform them.”

He slowly turned around and walked to the stairs again.

Zhu Lei’Er sneered: “They’re here to kill people and why act all friendly and so. Makes me sick.”

She said loud enough for Shiyun to hear, but he just ignored the remark and walk down the stairs.

Feng San said: "These people are leaders or experts of the orthodox schools, they have their manners and etiquette. If we want to be respected, we should learn to respect others."

Zhu Lei'Er didn't say anything but she was annoyed by Yu Fanghe and co.

And thought: They know we cannot leave, that's why they're pretending to be courteous. In other circumstances they would have stormed up here like a hungry pack of wolves.

A group of people carrying lamps walked up the stairs. The first one was Yu Fanghe.

Although master Nu's fame and martial arts are superior to Yu Fanghe but he was still the chancellor of Wulin. So nobody could walk in front of him.

Yu Peiyu felt uncomfortable seeing this man. Yu Fanghe bowed to Feng San and said: "Yu Fanghe has admired the fame of master Feng. I'm very pleased to finally meet you, master Feng."

Feng San said calmly: "You're the present chancellor of Wulin?"

Yu Fanghe said: "Indeed."

Feng San looked at him for an instant and diverted his eyes again. He seemed to be disappointed in this chancellor of Wulin and said coldly: "Take a seat."

Everyone could smell a flowerly sweet fragrance, Guo Pianxian backed into a corner with Zhong Jing.

Yu Peiyu knew that Madame Hai Tang was here and was very anxious. He wondered if Lin Daiyu was here too.

He could only see that Madame Hai Tang looked very pretty and graceful.

She seemed to notice Yu Peiyu too and smiled. She turned to Feng San and said: "Jun Haitang (*) pays her respects to Mr. Feng."

Even women would stare or glance at this beautiful woman a bit longer, but Feng San just said coldly: "Very good! Have a seat."

A person just stood there, he wore rags and looked quite arrogant.

Feng San looked at him and said: "The leader of the Beggars Association?"

That man replied: "Yes, I am Hong Lianhua."

He walked over to a window-ledge and sat down. Yu Fanghe and Madame Hai Tang just stood there. In fact there weren't any chairs here upstairs.

Suddenly a short skinny Taoist walked up with big paces and looked at Feng San and said: "You're Feng San?"

Zhu Lei'Er interrupted: "You're master Nu?"

Master Nu angrily said: "No little wretch can call my name that casually!"

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "My third uncle's name cannot be called out casually too. And certainly not by an annoying old Taoist."

There was fire in the eyes of master Nu and he yelled: "Shiyun! Come over here!"

Shiyun respectfully approached and asked: "Master, you summoned me."

Master Nu ordered: "This little wretch has a foul mouth, wash it for me!"

Shiyun said: "Yes, master."

But he didn't move. Master Nu yelled: "Why won't you do as I ordered!"

Volume 5 - The Phoenix Calls Out Over A Thousand "Li"

Chapter 21 : A Word of Honour

Yu Fanghe did not know how to retort this clever girl and her sharp tongue; he was stunned for a minute and turned to master Nu. He forced a smile and said: "I think master Nu should decide for himself."

Master Nu said loudly: "This kid is able to receive 300 stances of mine. Splendid! Good boy!"

Yu Fanghe said: "But you haven't exchanged 300 stances."

Master Nu stared at him and said: "Who says we haven't. We were engaged in combat, every move counts! It is my own fault that my techniques did not injure him."

Shiyun lowered his head when he heard his teacher's command, but still didn't move.

Master Nu angrily yelled: "Are you deaf!"

Shiyun replied: "Master, I'm not deaf."

Master Nu said: "Go over there and do as I ordered."

Shiyun answered respectfully: "Master, I wouldn't dare."

Master Nu angrily said: "What are you afraid of? If Feng San tries to stop you I will deal with him. Pupil against pupil, teacher against teacher. Now go!"

Shiyun shook his head and said: "Master, I....I...cannot."

Master Nu slapped him and yelled: "Are you going or not?"

Shiyun's face was red and swollen now but he still looked very friendly and gentle.

He gently replied: "Master, I cannot fight with ladies."

Master Nu leapt and yelled: "What if women want to kill you! Do you let them take your head!"

He slapped Shiyun a dozen times.

Shiyun received his punishment and still looked very respectful and friendly. He smiled: "But this Miss doesn't

want to kill me.”

Everyone looked at master Nu and Shiyun, such a strange and funny teacher and student.

Zhu Lei’Er was quite happy when she saw that young Taoist being slapped but now she spoke on his behalf: “I was the one who insulted you. You should be the one to teach me a lesson.”

Master Nu yelled: “If I would fight a little girl like you, people will laugh at me!”

Zhu Lei’Er coldly said: “Acting like a madman and hitting your own pupil for nothing. Won’t people laugh at that too?”

Everyone thought master Nu was going to exploded with anger.

Master Nu looked at her for some time and laughed loudly: “Good lass! Brave little lass!”

Everyone was surprised to see his reaction, and thought nobody can guess what this Taoist will do in a minute.

Madame Hai Tang stared at Zhu Lei’Er for some time and said gently: “How old are you, little Miss?”

Zhu Lei’Er said casually: “About your age.”

Madame Hai Tang laughed: “About my age? Do you know what my age is?”

Zhu Lei’Er glanced at her and said calmly: “If I look at your face you should be about 20.”

Madame Hai Tang unintentionally touched her own face and said: “Really?”

Zhu Lei’Er continued: “If I look at your figure, you should be 20 something too.”

Madame Hai Tang laughed happily: “Little Miss, you do know how to please someone.”

Everyone likes to be praised. Charming women in their thirties who still look beautiful, like to hear that they still

look like they're 18 to 20 years old.

Zhu Lei'Er looked at her hands and said: "Your hands tell me you're about 18."

Madame Hai Tang again unintentionally put out her hands.

Zhu Lei'Er added: "So if I added all three together that would be 58. So you're not 60 yet, are you?"

Everyone almost laughed out loud, even Feng San was amused by Zhu Lei'Er's joke.

But nobody dared to laugh out loud, Madame Hai Tang couldn't smile anymore. Yu Peiyu had no ill intentions towards Madame Hai Tang, he even thanked her for helping him out some time ago. Furthermore he knew that Lin Daiyu was her pupil.

He quickly interrupted: "Where are the rest of your friends, chancellor Yu?"

Yu Fanghe answered: "I know that master Feng's room is a bit too small to receive too many guests. My friends are waiting downstairs."

Zhu Lei'Er sneered: "You're confident that the four of you are capable enough to deal with us. The rest of your friends have surrounded the house."

Yu Fanghe calmly said: "Miss, I know you've a very sharp tongue. But I think you're wrong to think that master Nu and Madame Hai Tang with their high statuses will quarrel with you."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You're quarreling with me now. So your status is lower than theirs."

Yu Fanghe didn't know what to say and pretended not to hear that remark. He turned to Feng San and said: "Master Feng, I think you must know our intentions. We came here to ask master Feng to hand out a certain person."

Feng San just grunted.

Yu Fanghe continued: "This person is this Miss Zhu."

Again Feng San just grunted.

Yu Fanghe said: "Miss Zhu has done a few things in these years, a lot of friends in Wulin are not very pleased. As the chancellor of Wulin I have to look into this matter. I hope master Feng will not interfere in this affair, and let us take Miss Zhu away. I can promise you we will give Miss Zhu a chance to explain herself."

Feng San grunted again.

He grunted three times, Yu Fanghe didn't understand whether that was a yes or a no.

After some time Feng San sighed: "You have the audacity to come here and ask me to hand over Zhu Lei'Er."

Yu Fanghe smiled lightly: "The Feng San we see before us, isn't as fearful as the Feng San of years ago."

Feng San turned to master Nu and said: "They talk the talk, you must walk the walk."

Master Nu laughed: "Indeed, although the present Feng San isn't as fearful as the old one. But some types of weed are very difficult to eradicate. Not a lot of people are capable of receiving your stances, and I belong to that small group who can."

Feng San nodded and said: "Very good!.....Fourth brother, see how many stances you can receive."

Yu Peiyu walked up and said: "Reverend, I await your stances."

Hong Lianhua, Madame Hai Tang, Yu Fanghe and master Nu were shocked to see Yu Peiyu walk towards them and accepting the challenge. Master Nu angrily shouted: "Why do you order a little boy to fight on your behalf! What is the meaning of this!"

Feng San closed his eyes and didn't answer.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Don't you understand?"

Master Nu yelled: "I don't understand!"

Zhu Lei'Er explained: "With your lowly abilities my third uncle doesn't need to fight you personally. Furthermore people might talk if my uncle defeated you."

Master Nu yelled: "How can I fight this little child! He couldn't even defeat my pupil."

Feng San coldly interrupted: "The Feng San you see before you isn't as fearful as the old Feng San. The Yu Peiyu you see before isn't the same Yu Peiyu as a few hours ago."

Yu Fanghe's eyes glittered for a moment and asked: "This battle with him is decisive?"

Feng San nodded: "Indeed."

Yu Fanghe asked: "If young master Yu loses...."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I will go with you and accept your punishment."

Yu Fanghe asked: "Do you mean that?"

Feng San said: "How dare you question me decisions?"

Yu Fanghe looked extremely happy and said: "In that case..... Reverend Nu, you can begin now."

Master Nu angrily shouted: "You want me to fight that kid!"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Young master Yu has become the sworn brother of master Feng. When reverend duels with him no one will say that reverend Nu bullied a youngster."

Madame Hai Tang added: "Reverend, nobody will laugh you at you when you fight with the sworn brother of Feng San."

Zhu Lei'Er asked casually: "But what if reverend Nu loses?"

Master Nu leapt up and angrily shouted: "If I lose I will kowtow to this kid three times and call him master."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That isn't necessary, my fourth uncle isn't keen on having an old and hot-tempered pupil like you. He will have his hands full on you."

Master Nu shouted: "If I lose within 50 stances I will leave immediately."

Initially he didn't want to fight Yu Peiyu, but now his anger was aroused and nobody could stop him from fighting Yu Peiyu.

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "50 stances....make it 500 stances....but don't you think you can even touch the sleeves of my fourth uncle. However shouldn't we ask the opinions of the other people too?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Let's make it 300 stances.....if within 300 stances reverend Nu is unable to defeat young master Yu we will leave at once. And won't bother you anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Madame Hai Tang and asked: "What about you?"

Madame Hai Tang said sweetly: "Young master Yu is an old friend of mine. I hope when master Nu defeats him he won't be injured."

Zhu Lei'Er asked Hong Lianhua: "And you?"

Hong Lianhua looked pensive and just said coldly: "Very well!"

Nobody believes that Yu Peiyu could withstand 300 stances with master Nu. Everyone saw the martial arts of Yu Peiyu, they knew that it was very difficult for Yu Peiyu to receive 300 stances of Shiyun. It would be a miracle if Yu Peiyu could last 50 stances.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "It is a deal! No one is allowed to argue later on."

Master Nu grunted: "If someone is going to argue I will chop off his head!"

He turned to Yu Peiyu and said: "Yu kid! Attack first I will give you the advantage of three stances."

Yu Peiyu didn't reply, he was very nervous before these people arrived. He was worried whether he could pull it off. But now he was calm and thought: Master Nu is only human too, why fear him?

He put his entire concentration on master Nu. He was observing him very carefully; every move of master Nu didn't escape his attention.

Everyone thought: Is he scared silly?

Yu Fanghe smiled happily.

Master Nu lost his patience and stamped his feet and shouted: "You....."

Before he could finish Yu Peiyu advanced forward with lightning speed and aimed his palms for the knees of master Nu.

Martial arts experts like master Nu have reached the level where their martial arts have been integrated into their normal everyday actions. For example professional dancers have a more graceful walk than average people.

But when you're angry or upset you've disturbed that fine balance. If you raise you feet and you do not want to kick someone you have created a flaw in your footwork.

Yu Peiyu was looking for a window of opportunity for himself to attack. Even master Nu was surprised and shocked, he twirled around in mid-air and counter-attacked.

He chose the offense as the best form of defense, which was a marvelous move, fit only to a true martial arts expert.

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Giving the advantage of the first three stances?"

Master Nu went into offensive when he counter-attacked Yu Peiyu. Suddenly he whistled loudly and shot backwards. He broke of his attack and retreated to his original position. Everyone was shocked to see his movement, it was like magic. Master Nu's generated his energy to that whistle and during his exhale he propelled himself backwards, everyone was amazed by the internal energy of master Nu.

Hong Lianhua even praised: "Excellent internal power!"

Yu Fanghe asked: "Master Hong Lian, in your opinion how many stances can young master Yu withstand?"

Hong Lianhua, who was a bit sorry to see this young man die, answered: "Around 100 stances."

Yu Fanghe turned to Madame Hai Tang and asked: "What do you think, Madame?"

Madame Hai Tang smiled: "I have a lot of faith in the words of master Hong Lian."

Both Hong Lianhua and Madame Hai Tang didn't look at Guo Pianxian, he was standing in the corner of this room.

Guo Pianxian was pleased and thought: They didn't see me.

But then he understood and thought: It is impossible for them not to see me. They must know that Yu Peiyu isn't a match for master Nu, so that's why they are not worried that I'll escape from them.

Guo Pianxian broke out in a cold sweat.

At this point, the three stances advantage have passed and master Nu could attack now.

At first sight it seemed like there was nothing special about his techniques. It was like his fame did not match his abilities, but after three, five stances the power of his techniques began to show.

Although there was nothing special about his techniques, but the techniques fluently merged into each other. No loopholes or flaws were made.

Initially Zhu Lei'Er thought: The famous master Nu is just overestimated. But after a few stances she began to worry.

These simple techniques may look ordinary, but in fact they were most lethal. Every stance was powerful enough to split open rocks and iron and the attacks came quickly after each other with no pause.

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Feng San, with the hope he could tell her whether Yu Peiyu stood a chance.

But Feng San had his eyes closed, and seemed not be interested in this battle to live or death.

In a moment almost 30 stances were over, master Nu's attacks became fiercer and fiercer. Yu Peiyu could only defend himself and not attack.

It seemed that Yu Peiyu was pondering about every stance before he received master Nu's attacks. Everyone thought that it was silly of him. During a battle you won't have the time or could spare the concentration.

They were certain that Yu Peiyu couldn't last till the 100th stance.

Yu Fanghe smiled: "It is a shame that a lot of people will have to miss this fight."

Shiyun smiled: "In that case I'll draw open the curtains. So everyone can watch."

Shiyun rapidly drew the curtains and the light lit the room, Guo Pianxian wanted to sneak out of here in the dark but no it was too late.

He sighed and stood up and looked at Madame Hai Tang. He nodded to her and smiled, he was feeling shocked and happy to face her again. Somewhere he wanted to go to her and take her hand and talk about how much he missed her.

However Madame Hai Tang didn't look his way and turned to Yu Fanghe and asked: "Chancellor Yu, there is something very strange I want to ask you."

Yu Fanghe answered: "Madame, please ask."

Madame Hai Tang said: "In your opinion how does master Nu compare to the late reverend Tiangang of Kunlun?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "The martial arts of the Kunlun School are known for being fast and furious. Reverend Tiangang was also respected by all for his internal and external skills, but....."

He didn't finish his sentence.

Madame Hai Tang said: "But master Nu should be at least one level higher, isn't it?"

Yu Fanghe smiled but didn't answer. But the answer would be obvious master Nu is superior to the deceased reverend Tiangang.

Madame Hai Tang continued: "More than ten years ago my late teacher and I went to MountKunlun. At that time we saw that reverend Tiangang was engaged in combat with someone. His adversary looked like a lama from Tibet, this lama had very powerful internal strength too."

Yu Fanghe said: "That lama must be the one of three top martial arts experts of Tibet, Hongyun lama. He has a deep feud with the KunlunSchool, he has challenged Kunlun for many times."

Madame Hai Tang continued: "That time I stood away from reverend Tiangang and Hongyun lama for about 30 metres away from them. But I could still feel the force released by reverend Tiangang's techniques, even my clothes sort of swayed with the wind. However I do not sense anything from master Nu's attacks and we're standing quite close to them."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Master Nu has reached a higher level in internal energy control. He is able to focus his power only on Yu Peiyu not a drop of energy is wasted unnecessarily. When his attack is in vain, he will redraw his energy and use it into a new stance. If not all of us would have been blown outside by the force of his stances. Perhaps even the entire room would collapse."

Madame Hai Tang sighed: "Fortunately I'm not Yu Peiyu."

Zhu Lei'Er sneered: "He might not be in such a dire position as you think."

Madame Hai Tang laughed: "How would you know? Please tell me?"

Zhu Lei'Er ignored her and started counting softly:
"90,.....91.....92....."

She was counting a bit too fast, at this point master Nu and Yu Peiyu had only exchanged about 80 stances. Yu Fanghe and others were certain that Yu Peiyu couldn't meet up with the 300 stances margin.

And they thought they wouldn't be bothered by a few extra stances. And no need to start a debate with a young girl over it.

We could compare Yu Peiyu to a nail and master Nu to a hammer at this time. Yu Peiyu's situation is rather dire, but it is not easy for the hammer to bend a nail either.

He noticed that the attacks of master Nu were fierce and powerful and when he couldn't think of a way to counter a certain stance, master Nu would would (un)intentionally redraw that certain stance.

Zhu Lei'Er continued counting: "101....102....103..."

Yu Fanghe turned to Hong Lianhua and smiled: "It is amazing he's still standing. They've exchanged 100 stances now."

Hong Lianhua casually said: "Very amazing."

Shiyun suddenly said: "It seems that benefactor Yu's internal power has increased by a lot."

Hong Lianhua said: "It seems so."

Shiyun sighed: "It is most strange that someone could gain so much internal power and only after half a day."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Reverend Shiyun, rest assured. No matter how much internal energy he has gained it will be impossible for him to withstand the 100 stances of your teacher."

Shiyun said: "They've already exchanged over 100 stances now."

Yu Fanghe explained: "Your teacher wants to see what the level is of young master Yu and the skills of him. If not

during the 86 stance young master Yu would have been defeated.”

It seemed like he was explaining to Shiyun, but he made sure that it was loud enough everyone could hear it.

Master Nu laughed arrogantly: “Exactly I just wanted to see what great skills Feng San had taught him! Now I’ve seen enough!”

He increased the speed and the power to his attacks.

However Yu Peiyu could adapt to his speed and receive his attacks.

We should know that Yu Peiyu is remarkable young man, however how much can he grasp from Feng San’s abilities in a short few hours.

That’s why in the beginning the techniques he used to counter master Nu were stances he made up in a flash. That’s why he was a bit slow in the beginning. But after 100 stances he began to feel more secure and his reaction to create stances ad hoc was also quicker. And his stances were becoming better and more special. It’s like when a layman plays go for the first time, at first you’re cautious and hesitating but after awhile you get the hang of it.

Also when dealing with an martial arts master like master Nu your potential will be pushed beyond limits. And your latent energy will be awoken as time progresses.

Zhu Lei’Er continued: “160.....161.....”

Yu Fanghe smiled: “Miss Zhu, you’re mistaken. They’ve just exchanged their 153th stance.”

At first he wasn’t concerned about an extra one, two stances. But now he saw that Yu Peiyu was not losing he started to count too.

Zhu Lei’Er giggled: “Weren’t you feeling very confident earlier? You’re worried now, aren’t you? 167.....168.....”

She continued to count at her own pace and ignored Yu Fanghe's comments.

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Miss Zhu, you can count in your own pace but we'll minus those extra eight stances....."

Master Nu shouted: "Does it matter, those extra eight stances? Do you think I won't defeat this brat within 300 stances!"

During his shout he hit out his fist, Yu Peiyu drew two circles in the air with his hands and blocked that stance. However the stance was blocked but the force was still quite powerful and hit Yu Peiyu.

CrackkkkkThere was a hole in the floor, Yu Peiyu did seem like a nail and was hit through the board.

At this point Zhu Lei'Er counted till 171...She stopped and shrieked.

Yu Fanghe smiled happily: "Young master Yu has already lost, but it is admirable that he was able to receive more than 100 stances of master Nu."

Zhu Lei'Er stared at him and said: "Who says my fourth uncle has lost?"

Yu Fanghe laughed: "Isn't this losing?"

Before Zhu Lei'Er could answer, Yu Peiyu flew back out of the hole and whisked his hand towards master Nu.

Zhu Lei'Er clapped her hands and giggled: "Can't you see? The only things broken are the stairs to the first floor. There isn't a hole in the stomach of my fourth uncle. If making a hole in the floor is considered winning I'll punch seven, eight holes for you, alright?....179.....180....."

She started to count again and ignored Yu Fanghe.

Master Nu and Yu Peiyu had exchanged another eight stances now, Yu Fanghe laughed: "Young master Yu, don't forget the hole in the floor saved your life!"

Yu Peiyu also understood that the floor saved his life, if the floor didn't crack he would have injured by the internal force of master Nu. Fortunately he fell through the hole, the energy dispersed because the energy swayed away with his body.

And in a normal duel Yu Peiyu would have already lost, but this fight concerned the lives of several other people. So he pretended not to hear Yu Fanghe's cynical remarks and continued to receive master Nu's attacks.

After another twenty, thirty stances the usual smile on Yu Peiyu's face was gone. Everyone inside and outside the room could hear the wind blowing and everyone whispered to each other.

"They've exchanged more than 200 stances now. Do you think he can last another 100?"

"Can't really say."

"It's strange that this young brat is that fierce. In the beginning I thought he wouldn't last ten, twenty stances. He seems to grow more vigorous as the battle progresses."

Master Nu angrily yelled: "SHUT YOUR TRAPS! Whoever opens his damned mouth again! I will personally chop off his frigging head!"

Nobody dared to whisper again, but they understood that master Nu was worried too now.

Zhu Lei'Er continued to count loudly: "212.....213....."

Guo Pianxian's eyes glowed with happiness.

But only Yu Peiyu's heart began to sink, he knew he couldn't meet up with the 300 stances limit anymore.

Yu Peiyu also understood that he might not even withstand another 30 stances.

Even Feng San opened his eyes and look worried. Only he and Yu Peiyu knew that Yu Peiyu had almost used up all his internal energy. And had to rest and to regenerate.

Feng San had his eyes closed the entire time, but he could hear force released from the palms, fists of Yu Peiyu. Awhile ago master Nu gained the upperhand but Feng San was not worried because he knew Yu Peiyu had still abundant energy to protect himself.

But now every stance of Yu Peiyu was generated with strong internal power but when he redraws his stance the energy is gone.

Every time he uses a stance his internal energy will diminish by a bit.

And when he's exhausted and his energy gone, he won't be able to withstand the powerful techniques of master Nu.

Suddenly master Nu's fist came crashing down on Yu Peiyu, the force released was as sharp as a blade. Yu Peiyu quickly blocked but was still pushed backwards.

Master Nu immediately knew he was becoming weaker and weaker and increased his attacks. He attacked fiercely with tree first techniques and forced Yu Peiyu into a corner.

The Wulin people who were here with Yu Fanghe were shocked and happy. They didn't understand why Yu Peiyu was weakening and also didn't understand why he could have lasted this long.

Zhu Lei'Er counted: "226.....227....."

Her voice trembled a bit.

There were still more than 70 stances over, and even Zhong Jing, the girl with the least martial arts insight, understood that Yu Peiyu couldn't last for another 70 stances.

Madame Hai Tang sighed and said softly: "He won't make it to 260."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "I think 250 is enough."

Master Nu shouted: "I SAY 240 IS ENOUGH!"

Both his fists came down on Yu Peiyu as lightning bolts, Zhu Lei'Er at this moment counted: "238."

Yu Peiyu was confused by the numerous shadows of the palms and fists of Master Nu. He did not know how to block it and even if he knew he couldn't cope with the overwhelming internal force generating this stance.

There was no other option than for him to be defeated.

Yu Fanghe laughed happily, Hong Lianhua got off the ledge and stood up, Madame Hai Tang shook her head and Shiyun recited softly with a smile: "May the deities be merciful."

Yu Peiyu received that blow and his back was forced backwards by the overpowering energy of Master Nu.

It looked his back was about to snap.

Master Nu yelled: "Are you giving up now?"

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and shook his head.

Master Nu increased his energy to his palms and said: "Fall over!"

However Yu Peiyu didn't fall over but he was slowly being pressed to the floor and he sweated heavily.

Everyone held his breath and looked in awe at this scene.

They heard a soft crackling noise, it came from the spine of Yu Peiyu. His spine was about to snap into two halves.

Zhong Jing wept and sobbed: "Young master Yu, please give up! Surrender!"

Guo Pianxian was wiping away his sweat.

Madame Hai Tang sighed: "Poor child! Why must you..... (*sigh)."

Zhu Lei'Er cried too and wanted to urge Yu Peiyu to surrender too.

She couldn't watch anymore, Hong Lianhua called out: "Master Feng, do you really want to see this young man dead?"

Feng San said sadly: "Enough. I see no other choice, but to...."

Yu Peiyu loudly interrupted: “NO! We haven’t lost yet. I’m not done for it yet.”

Master Nu angrily said: “Stubborn child! Pigheaded temper! Do you think I really will not kill you!”

He stepped forward with one foot and accidentally stood on a linen bag. With his omnipotent energy he easily stepped a hole in the linen bag.

But doing so countless snakes, centipedes, lizards, etc. all kinds of strange venomous creatures jumped on his body.

Master Nu was shocked and quickly stepped backwards; he was covered with those creepy crawlers. Everyone was shocked and some even shrieked loudly.

Master Nu was angry, he raised his arms to throw a few of his body and used his feet to stamp them to death. But there were too many so he kept using his hands to brush, hit those creatures. He lifted his legs to kick and to fling the creepy crawlers of his legs.

If it wasn’t for his magnificent internal strength he would have been bitten a couple of dozen times by those venomous creatures.

Zhu Lei’Er eyes glared up and counted clearly: “241, 242, 243....”

She continued to count and had reach the number 280 in a few moments. At this point Yu Peiyu realised what she was doing and called: “No, that doesn’t count. That doesn’t count.”

She ignored him and continued to count: “281, 282, 283.....”

By the time master Nu crushed the last centipede with his foot she had reached 300.

Everyone was quiet and did not know what to say now. Yu Fanghe laughed: “Of course that doesn’t count.”

Zhu Lei’Er sneered: “Has my fourth uncle been defeated?”

Yu Peiyu leant against the wall and was panting heavily but he was still standing.

Yu Fanghe was silenced. Zhu Lei'Er said: "My fourth uncle is still standing; master Nu's 300 stances are over. We've won."

Yu Fanghe retorted: "But master Nu's final stances were not aimed at young master Yu, everyone here could see that."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Master Nu was engaged in combat with my fourth uncle, his every move, stance should be directed towards my fourth uncle. It is not our fault if he likes to hit himself instead aiming for my uncle."

Yu Fanghe said: "Those creatures....."

Zhu Lei'Er interrupted: "Those creatures were in a linen bag, they didn't attack him for no reason. He stamped on them first and we didn't release them. Furthermore he has killed them and should really pay for them."

Yu Fanghe did not know how to retort this clever girl and her sharp tongue; he was stunned for a minute and turned to master Nu. He forced a smile and said: "I think master Nu should decide for himself."

Master Nu said loudly: "This kid is able to receive 300 stances of mine. Splendid! Good boy!"

Yu Fanghe said: "But you haven't exchanged 300 stances."

Master Nu stared at him and said: "Who says we haven't. We were engaged in combat, every move counts! It is my own fault that my techniques did not injure him."

Yu Fanghe stood there like an idiot not knowing what to say.

Zhu Lei'Er hugged Yu Peiyu and said happily: "Fourth uncle, we've won! We've won!"

Yu Fanghe composed himself and smiled: "Master Nu said you won. So you won."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Those are finally words fitting of the chancellor of Wulin."

Yu Fanghe smiled lightly: "You can leave this place, I promise you we won't trouble you."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Leave? This is my house. Why should I leave?"

Yu Fanghe looked annoyed, but master Nu said loudly: "They shouldn't leave! WE SHOULD LEAVE....."

Two men leapt into the room through the window, one of them with sharp eyes and a face full of pimples said sternly: "Right! We should leave but before we go we shall chop off their heads!"

Zhu Lei'Er angrily asked: "Who are you?"

Yu Fanghe smiled and said: "This is the famous master Zhao Qun, his nickname is Outer Sky Heaven. His iron palms and his 72 golden darts are well-known through the realm."

He pointed to the other man who stood next to the man with pimples, he was a tall man and his face was long like the head of a horse. Yu Fanghe said: "This is master Huang Feng, his nickname is A Thousand Mile Stallion. His flying kicks of the northern province are the best."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Why would anyone be a horse? But he does have a face like a horse. And the other one should wash his face properly, all those pimples."

Huang Feng and Zhao Qun were really angry now, Huang Feng sneered: "Master Nu is too benevolent, but we won't let you go. We don't need to uphold any Wulin rules when we're dealing with heretic fiends like you. Little b-i-t-c-h- come with us!"

He wanted to grab Zhu Lei'Er, but someone suddenly stood in front of him. It was Shiyun who smiled friendly: "My teacher has agreed to let them go. Benefactor Huang leave them alone, please."

Huang Feng sternly said: "The affairs of Wulin seniors are not your concern!"

He lifted his arm again and pushed out towards Shiyun in the hope to push him aside. But his attack was not successful and Shiyun still stood there smiling.

Huang Feng looked annoyed, master Nu walked over and said earnestly: "My pupil is rude, so you wish to teach him a lesson."

Huang Feng had seen him ordering, hitting Shiyun around. He thought Shiyun wasn't master Nu's favourite student.

So Huang Feng said: "Indeed. On your behalf I would like to....."

Master Nu angrily interrupted him: "Who do you think you are! You're not fit to teach my student a lesson! How dare you lay your filthy hands on him!"

Master Nu grabbed Huang Feng's wrist with incredible speed, and broke his wrist.

Huang Feng cried out in pain, he kicked out with his right leg. He is famous for his kicks, he could even smash a rock with his powerful kicks. Master Nu didn't avoid that kick and even allowed it to hit his body. But the only thing that broke was Huang Feng's leg.

Huang Feng cried out in pain and fainted. Master Nu didn't look at him anymore and turned to Zhao Qun and coldly said: "Do you discard my words too and want to chop off their heads."

Zhao Qun looked scared but as he's also a famous martial artist. So he had to uphold his reputation.

He managed to smile: "Master Nu, since you're not willing to interfere in this matter. We will take care of it for you."

Master Nu angrily shouted: "Give them to you! What idiotic skills do you have? Now you see that they're too tired you want to take advantage of the situation! That Yu kid is even too weak to stand now."

Master Nu grabbed Zhao Qun by his robe and lifted him up.

Zhao Qun was angry and shocked, he generated his full internal power to his palms and struck out at the shoulders of master Nu.

His iron palms were a respected skill in Wulin. He could break bricks with a mere blow. However his iron palms became as fragile as egg shells when facing master Nu. Zhao Qun called out in pain and broke out in a cold sweat.

Master Nu easily lifted Huang Feng with his right hand and with his left hand Zhao Qun.

Everyone was shocked to see his omnipotent martial arts and realised how good Yu Peiyu was. Zhao Qun and Huang Feng were famous martial artists with good martial arts and could not even exchange one stance with master Nu.

And young Yu Peiyu was able to receive 300 of his blows; everyone admired him and were impressed by his martial arts.

Master Nu yelled: "Who else dares to question my words!"

Nobody dared to say another word, master Nu grunted and walked away with big paces.

Shiyun put his palms together and said gently: "This lowly Taoist is very fortunate to meet so many skilful masters. I hope to see you very soon and learn from your teachings."

Although he addressed everyone in the room, but his eyes were concentrated on the pretty Zhu Lei'Er.

Zhu Lei'Er softly pouted: "Leave, you little Taoist with your shifty eyes!"

Shiyun smiled and seemed not to hear that remark and bowed to Yu Fanghe: "After you, chancellor Yu."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "Take care of yourself master Feng. You too, young master Yu. I will take my leave now."

Madame Hai Tang paid her respects to Feng San and left too, Guo Pianxian turned pale. But Madame Hai Tang just ignored

him, she looked at Zhong Jing and asked: "Are you a pupil of Xu Shuzhen?"

Zhong Jing didn't want to look weak answered: "Yes, I am."

Madame Hai Tang sighed: "Poor child.....poor child....."

Zhong Jing was angered by her reaction and loudly said: "I don't need your compassion. Save that for women whose husband left them."

Madame Hai Tang smiled casually and walked away. She didn't even feel angry, she felt she was above that. Zhong Jing felt she was being looked down by her rival. She started to cry.

Hong Lianhua looked at Guo Pianxian, he looked at Feng San and at Yu Peiyu.

He made a somersault through the window and was gone.

Everyone left, Yu Peiyu felt relieved and finally passed out.

The light shone on Yu Peiyu's pale face, Zhu Lei'Er quickly went over to hug him and sobbed: "Fourth uncle, I....I....don't know how to thank you."

Zhu Lei'Er cried and lowered her head, Yu Peiyu smiled with difficulty: "At least we've won. Why are you sad?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I'm not sad. I'm just very very happy." But she continued to sob.

Feng San said: "Lei'Er, no need to say thanks to your fourth uncle."

Guo Pianxian coughed dryly and smiled: "Brother Yu has managed to defeat master Nu. From now on everyone will respect brother Yu...."

Zhu Lei'Er scolded: "How dare you call my fourth uncle [brother]? You're not fit."

Guo Pianxian smiled dryly: "Young master Yu has become very famous now, however....."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "However what?"

Guo Pianxian said: "However we cannot stay here anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er said with indignation: "Why not? This is my home!"

Guo Pianxian said: "I'm afraid that Yu Fanghe won't let this matter rest that easily. He may very well have another plan to deal with us."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "If they're really up to something, there is no use in running. Besides my third uncle isn't a coward."

Guo Pianxian retorted: "But staying here isn't a good plan."

Zhu Lei'Er sneered: "You're welcome to leave at any time. We won't keep you."

However Guo Pianxian was afraid when he stepped out of the house Hong Lianhua and Madame Hai Tang were waiting for him. Guo Pianxian looked embarrassed by Zhu Lei'Er sneer.

The wind blew strongly; everyone stayed silent and looked worried when they knew that Yu Fanghe might return.

Suddenly a dog barked loudly and awfully shrill, Zhong Jing said: "Why is that dog barking that awfully eerie?"

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Maybe Yu Fanghe stepped on his tail." But she too was a bit afraid now.

Suddenly the dog's barking died out like that. The barking was awful enough but the silence now was even more frightening.

At this point the air turned ominous, like something sinister was about to happen. Zhu Lei'Er wanted to say a few words to break the silence but she too didn't know what to say.

All of a sudden a burst of fire flew towards their house and the house caught fire and started to burn at rapid speed.

Guo Pianxian yelled: "That old fiend wants to burn us to a crisp."

Yu Peiyu said: "That's why he gathered the villagers outside the town; he wanted to burn the entire Family Li village down if everything failed. So much for the chivalry of the orthodox schools."

The fire had already surrounded them. Guo Pianxian said anxiously: "We can still make it now. We must hurry!"

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Feng San, Feng San didn't say a word. Guo Pianxian said: "We can't hesitate anymore! We should go now!"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "There is no other choice."

Zhu Lei'Er said anxiously: "But what about third uncle....."

Yu Peiyu said: "I will carry third brother on my back, and you follow me closely."

Silver Blossom shrieked: "WHAT ABOUT ME! YOU CANNOT LEAVE ME HERE!"

Zhu Lei'Er gritted her teeth and said: "Fourth uncle, I will carry third uncle. You....you can carry her."

Guo Pianxian looked at Zhong Jing and carried her on his back. He said: "No more hesitation! We must go now!"

Feng San said: "All of you go now!"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Third uncle....."

Feng San looked angry and said: "I will not be carried away out of here. What do you take me for?"

Yu Peiyu said: "But now....."

Feng San interrupted him angrily: "If word would spread out that Feng San was carried out of here and fled. I will not stand for such humiliation, I will rather die!"

Yu Peiyu urged: "Third brother, you can't...."

Feng San said loudly: "My mind is made up!"

Zhu Lei'Er was about to go mad with frustration, but she knew when Feng San had made up his mind no one could change it.

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Brother, I know you're worried that you will burden me. But I'm still strong enough to storm out of here with you."

Feng San closed his eyes, the fire was spreading rapidly. It seems that Yu Fanghe and his lackeys have made the necessary arrangements to make the fire spread faster.

Guo Pianxian said: "If you don't leave, I will leave now. Everyone....."

He didn't know what to say and in a flash he was gone. He had already stormed out with Zhong Jing.

Feng San said sternly: "You should go too."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If you won't go, I won't go."

Feng San said angrily: "You dare to disobey me."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "I will listen to your every word, but not this time."

Feng San pushed her away and said: "If you disobey me, I will kill you now!"

Zhu Lei'Er said resolute: "I won't go. Kill me if you must, third uncle."

Silver Blossom shouted: "Yu Peiyu, won't you go?"

Yu Peiyu just stood there, stunned.

He couldn't just leave Feng San here to his fate.

Silver Blossom cursed angrily: "You're all mad! Mad! Just my luck to run into a group of madmen!"

She wanted to use her art of levitation to leap out of the window. But her internal strength was practically gone and fell down and bruised her leg.

Yu Peiyu sighed.

Feng San sternly said: "You really want to stay here!"

Yu Peiyu looked at Zhu Lei'Er and said: "Brother, I....."

Feng San said: "Very well! I will go first!"

He lifted his palm and was about to strike his own skull.

Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu quickly dashed forward to try and prevent him from committing suicide.

BANNNNNG! The wall crumbled and a figure dashed into the room, because of the thick smoke Yu Peiyu couldn't see his face.

This figure was incredibly fast and picked up Feng San from the bed and was gone again.

Zhu Lei'Er yelled: "Who are you? What are doing with my uncle?"

But they could hear Feng San and the mystery person saying

"Who is it?"

"It is me!"

They could hear Feng San sighing, Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu dashed out to follow him.

But this mystery person was too fast and the fire caused them to a lot of trouble too. And before they knew it Feng San and that mysterious figure were gone.

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Give me back my uncle! I beg you please return him to me....."

She fell to the ground and started to cry, Yu Peiyu now noticed that they had already stormed out of the flaming house.

Although their clothes were scorched a bit, but they weren't injured.

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Who was that? Why did he take my third uncle?"

Yu Peiyu sighed but said gently: "Don't worry! I don't think that person had any ill intentions. If it wasn't for him or her we would still be in the fire."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What about third uncle?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I think third brother knew that person. Probably his friend. With such high martial arts third brother won't be in any danger."

Zhu Lei'Er wasn't sobbing that sadly anymore but asked: "You're right. Judging from what they said to each other, they must know each other. But why did that person leave me behind?"

Yu Peiyu said gently: "Perhaps he didn't know who you were."

Zhu Lei'Er said sadly: "You're right. I don't know any of third uncle's friends. Nobody knows me.....I.....I....."

Zhu Lei'Er started to cry sadly again when she realised she was all alone again. No parents, no uncle and no home.

Yu Peiyu felt sad too and consoled: "At least fourth uncle knows you. And you know me too, right?"

Zhu Lei'Er said sadly: "Will you leave me too, fourth uncle?"

Yu Peiyu sighed in his heart and said: "Of course not. I will never leave you behind. I will take you along wherever I go."

But in his current state he couldn't take care of himself let alone someone else."

The fire came to their direction and they could hear the voices of angry people. Those must be the villagers, they must be furious to see their homes burnt to a crisp.

A loud voice said: "Everyone stay calm! We will pay for the construction of your destroyed houses. Don't worry!"

Yu Peiyu frowned and said: "That is strange. The rebuilding of so many houses costs a lot. It is most strange that they would actually burn down an entire village just because of us. Or is there more to it?"

The fire slowly died out, and it was still very dark. Zhu Lei'Er sat on the ground looking sad and exhausted. Yu Peiyu had taken her to the cemetery, and she had not said a word since."

Yu Peiyu said: "They did not set fire to kill us that simply."

Zhu Lei'Er stared at a new grave and said: "Hmmm."

Yu Peiyu said: "If they wanted us dead they would have placed a number of henchmen around the house. We could easily escape and did not see a single man."

Zhu Lei'Er again said: "Hmmm."

Yu Peiyu said: "They did everything just to get us out of your house."

Zhu Lei'Er was paying attention now and said: "Are they mad? Just to get us out of there, they burnt down the entire Family Li Village and have to pay the heavy compensation for it! Why?"

Yu Peiyu said softly: "There must be a reason.....there is bound to be a reason....."

Chapter 22 : Ridding Your Enemies By Your Adversary's Hands

Yu Fanghe smiled: "If the famous Tian Chixing The Day Eats The Constellation has something troubling him. I'm most willing to help."

Tian Chixing was a bit startled and asked: "How do you know my name?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "I have heard of your fame and appearances for a very long time. It is indeed a honour to finally meet you. The Star Constellation devours everything, he has eaten countless martial artists. His stomach can hold a thousand people."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "Fourth uncle, I thought their intentions were obvious, but after hearing your words I'm confused again."

Yu Peiyu said: "There must be a reasonable explanation for all of this."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Do you have an explanation?"

Yu Peiyu said: "There must be a hidden secret in your home, one of great value."

Zhu Lei'Er said with surprise: "Secret?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Because of this secret that's why your fa.....Dongfang Meiyu didn't leave. Also the reason why granny Hu came and it explains why Yu Fanghe set fire to the entire town."

Zhu Lei'Er eyes looked surprised and said softly: "Secret? What kind of secret?"

Yu Peiyu asked her: "Did your mother say anything extraordinary before she passed away?"

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and said: "My mother said nothing special. She only told me that the house was the only thing she left me. She hoped that I would treasure it, that's why I am not keen on leaving it."

Zhu Lei'Er looked enlightened and looked at Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu looked at her too.

They both stood up and quietly went back to Zhu Lei'Er's house.

Although the fire was extinguished but there were still some small fires here and there, the smoke was very thick too.

But the house was burnt down, like the larger part of Family Li Village. Some of the walls were standing. Some men in black robes were cleaning up the mess and putting out small fires.

The villagers and Yu Fanghe and co were nowhere to be seen.

Yu Peiyu stood in a corner of the house and carefully observed the surroundings.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Fourth uncle, shall we look now? Or shall we wait and see what they're up to first?"

Yu Peiyu said earnestly: "You haven't noticed anything all these years. So the secret must be hidden very well. Furthermore now the fire has been put out for the larger part, they will soon be here."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Will we look for a place to hide now?"

Yu Peiyu nodded.

Zhu Lei'Er looked around and said: "Let us hide in that house there."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "There are still a few small fires there, they will soon go over to put it out."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Fourth uncle, what do you suggest?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "The kitchen."

Zhu Lei'Er looked in the direction of the kitchen and said: "But the kitchen has been burnt down entirely, we cannot hide in there."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Although the kitchen is gone, there is still something that's still there."

Zhu Lei'Er immediately understood and smiled: "Of course the furnace*, that wasn't destroyed in the fire. Fourth uncle, you're very smart."

{*Note: The furnaces in those days were quite large, and with difficulty two persons could hide in it.}

They entered the kitchen and saw that the water vat was still intact too, Yu Peiyu took a bucket and poured water on the furnace to cool it down.

After a few buckets they quickly hid in there.

Zhu Lei'Er looked at saw that her home was burnt to a crisp and felt very sad, but she smiled to Yu Peiyu: "Look uncle, my home is burnt down entirely."

She didn't want Yu Peiyu to know that she was sad, how could she not be sad? This was her home, she was born here and grew up here too. She spent her entire life in this house and now it was gone.

Yu Peiyu gently consoled her: "Don't be sad. If you like this place we can rebuild a house on the same spot."

Zhu Lei'Er remained silent for a moment and sighed sadly: "We can rebuild the house, but we cannot go back to the past."

Yu Peiyu too was saddened.

He thought back about his home, his courtyard and those happy, tranquil days with his father. His benevolent, kind smile and his wise teachings.....

That was just six months ago, but it seemed like a lifetime away.

He said sadly: "What is in the past cannot be brought back. You're right."

Zhu Lei'Er said sadly: "I used to get up very early in the morning. I went to the kitchen and started to cook congee for my third uncle. Sometimes I would put in half a pig's liver and entire chicken. Third uncle would praise me and eat the entire bowl empty. But now....."

She lowered her head and sighed: "The furnace is still here and I can still cook congee, but who will eat it....."

Yu Peiyu was very saddened and comforted her: "Fourth uncle will eat your congee."

Zhu Lei'Er lifted her head and said with happiness: "Really!"

It was dawn now and the light shone on her beautiful face. Her watery eyes were filled with happiness and joy. Although there were still some tears on her face but her sadness was gone now.

Yu Peiyu was a bit startled to see her happy expression, his heart skipped a beat. He quickly turned away his head.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "I know that fourth uncle is just saying that to make me feel better. A hero like you will have plenty of important matters to attend to, you won't have time to eat congee of a small girl like me."

Her voice sounded ever so sad, Yu Peiyu couldn't bear to see her like this and said with a smile: "Fourth uncle isn't lying to you. I do have a lot of things to do, but those businesses will be over one day. At that day I will come here and eat your delicious congee."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "I will prepare a large pot just for you everyday. I won't let you go unless you've eaten every bit."

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "Eating congee everyday isn't good either, not very nutritious. You have cook me an egg once in awhile. You don't want to starve your fourth uncle, do you?"

Zhu Lei'Er giggled: "Congee is only in the morning, for lunch I will poach you some eggs. Also a bowl of chicken soup and deliciously roasted beef. I can guarantee that you'll be addicted to me cooking in just one day."

Seeing that she was happy again, Yu Peiyu was pleased too. However when he remembered that his family and home were gone, he hadn't avenged his father yet. He was sad again, that fake Yu Fanghe used the name of his father to do all kinds of evil things. He was facing this war alone with no help, I think the only time he has for a bowl of congee will be in another lifetime. All of a sudden the tears welled up in his eyes.

Zhu Lei'Er asked gently: "Fourth uncle, why are you crying?"

Yu Peiyu quickly wiped away his tears and said with a smile: "Fourth uncle wasn't crying. I'm a grown man, some dust just entered my eyes."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him for some time, she laughed: "Uncle, you think that you're very mature, aren't you? If you weren't the sworn brother of third uncle I should call you [fourth brother]."

Yu Peiyu was happy but also a bit melancholic when he saw her pretty and happy face. He didn't know what to say.

At this point some people walked over.

Four men entered the inn next to the house of Zhu Lei'Er, the four men looked agile and muscular. In one look one could see that they were strong men but by their walk they didn't seem to have any superior martial arts.

The first man carried a long spear, the second used a long fork and the other two both carried a sabre and a shield.

They were using their weapons to poke at the ashes of the building, it seemed that they were looking for something.

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Yu Peiyu, her eyes were filled with respect and admiration. She praised his intelligence in her heart.

The wielder of the spear laughed: "The warden is too punctual, nobody is still here."

The man with the fork laughed too: "Do you think the warden was responsible for this order?"

The man with the spear asked: "Whose order is it?"

The man with the fork waved his hand to call them around him. And he lowered his voice and said: "I heard that our warden is aiding the chancellor of Wulin in search of something."

The man with the spear said: "So setting fire was also his idea?"

The man with the fork answered: "Of course it was his idea. Otherwise the warden wouldn't have come here personally."

Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er understood now, these were not the henchmen of Yu Fanghe. Yu Fanghe had conveniently found a scapegoat, and if something happened the scapegoat would be blamed.

Those men whispered and walked to a different location and continued to poke between the ashes.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "This Yu Fanghe is very crafty. He has planned and thought of everything. He has found some fool to take the fall and protect his reputation as chancellor of Wulin."

Yu Peiyu sighed too: "He is the real mastermind behind all these plots, and if someone would find out he would easily shift the blame away."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "For killing he had asked master Nu. But who is this warden they kept talking about?"

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "I think it must be the warden of the Thunderbolt Clan. I've heard many things about the secretive weaponry of the Thunderbolt Clan and their mastery of gunpowder. Only they are capable of burning down an entire town in a few moments."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Fourth uncle, do you know the name of the warden of the Thunderbolt Clan?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Lei Feng."

Zhu Lei'Er repeated softly: "Thunderbolt Clan....Lei Feng.....Thunderbolt Clan....Lei Feng....."

Silver Blossom wasn't killed or injured in the fire. Thank goodness for her.

She was repeating those names a few times, Yu Peiyu was puzzled and asked: "Are you planning on taking revenge on them?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Although they were just following orders. But they're responsible for burning down my home. I will burn down their homes too, or else I won't be able to live with myself."

Yu Peiyu didn't say anything but just sighed.

This young girl was very proud and stubborn. If you had mistreated her she will always remember and try to take revenge.

However if you're good to her, she will always remember your kindness and will try to repay you.

Yu Peiyu was worried about her and couldn't leave her to her fate.

At this point a loud voice said: "The Lightningfire of the Thunderbolt Clan is very formidable. I'm most fortunate to see this amazing skill."

It was the Flowered Chestnut Sword, Lin Shoujuan.

He deliberately spoke loudly, so everyone will be convinced that it was the Thunderbolt Clan which was responsible for this fire.

Another voice said: "This fire has also burnt away lots of our money."

The man sounded proud and arrogant, it was the warden of the Thunderbolt Clan Lei Feng.

Zhu Lei'Er whispered softly: "This Lei Feng is an idiot, he doesn't know that he's scapegoat."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Let us not talk anymore. We might be discovered."

A group of men walked over smiling and chatting.

Yu Fanghe and an imposing old man were walking ahead. Lin Shoujuan and a few others were following them.

The Thunderbolt Clan was not only famous in Wulin, but they also held monopoly in the sell of products related with fire, i.e. lamps, flints, oil, etc.

They were one of the most richest clans in the world, and this warden felt very proud and was very arrogant.

The four men earlier respectfully stood there to await their warden.

Lei Feng asked sternly: "Did you find anyone else?"

One of the men answered: "Except for that woman, we didn't see anyone else."

Yu Peiyu knew that the woman was Silver Blossom. He was glad to know that Silver Blossom was alright. He also felt guilty for leaving her behind and felt very bad about it.

He felt that he should have taken better care for her, since she was travelling with him.

Lin Shoujuan suddenly walked over to the four and said: "Sorry to have troubled you."

The four of them bowed and one of them said: "It is nothing."

Lin Shoujuan said: "Seeing the way you've put out the fire that fast, you must have a lot of experience in these situations."

The man said: "Very true, I've done this sort of thing many times."

Lin Shoujuan suddenly turned very angry and said: "How dare you! So you're admitting setting fire and killing is something you've done often!"

He drew his sword and before they understood what happened, they were already killed by Lin Shoujuan.

Lei Feng turned around and yelled: "Lin Shoujuan! Are you insane!"

Lin Shoujuan took out a white cloth and wiped off the blood of his sword. He turned to Lei Feng and said coldly: "These four just admitted that they've set fire to villages before. And they admitted this in front of chancellor Yu. Now that I know what they've done in the past, I cannot allow them to continue to cause evil."

Lei Feng angrily said: "What the hell are you talking about? Chancellor, do... have you heard what this fellow is saying?"

Yu Fanghe said casually: "Everyone is allowed to kill rogues like these. He is right."

Lei Feng backed away from Yu Fanghe with three paces and said with fear: "But....but set...setting fire was your idea! You promised us 30,000 taels of silver if we burnt down this village. We did all the work and....and now you're saying this kind non....nonsense."

Yu Fanghe looked a bit angry and scolded: "I have always upheld chivalry in my life. I would never instruct to do such a vile act. How dare you slander my reputation? If you don't watch your mouth, don't blame me for being fair."

Lei Feng was sweating like a pig and understood what was going on. He shouted angrily: "You despicable hypocrite! Why..why do you want to frame me!"

All of a sudden someone attacked him with a sword, it was Lin Shoujuan. He attacked swiftly with seven, eight stances and Lei Feng couldn't even draw his sabre. His shoulder was

cut and he fell down. He turned to the group of martial arts experts and yelled: "How can you allow him to do this! You're famous martial artists too!"

The men who came with Yu Fanghe looked up into the sky and were chit-chatting with each other.

There was little left of Lei Feng's expensive brocade. The Thunderbolt Clan was never famous for their martial arts and this Lei Feng was spoiled by his father and grandfather when he was a child. So he never trained intensively in his life.

And Lin Shoujuan was a good swordsman and didn't give him the opportunity to use his famous Thunderbolt Clan secretive weaponry.

Lei Feng managed with difficulty to withstand ten stances, he was panting heavily and laughed arrogantly: "Yu Fanghe! You want to silence me, don't you? You can have my life!"

He leapt towards the tip of the sword of Lin Shoujuan, he didn't want to be humiliated anymore. The sword pierced through his chest, Lin pulled out his sword.

Lei Feng put his hands on his wound on his chest. He laughed sadly: "Good! Marvellous! I've finally seen the chivalry of the so-called orthodox schools! HAHAAHAHAHA....."

His final laughter sounded very eerie, most of those men got goosebumps when they heard Lei Feng.

And some of them even lowered their heads. Lei Feng said with his dying breath: "It is a shame that Hong Lianhua isn't here, he wouldn't.....wouldn't....."

Before he could finish he was dead.

Zhu Lei'Er grabbed Yu Peiyu's hand tightly and was sweating, she was very afraid of what she just saw. Even Yu Peiyu was astounded and shocked.

Another two men quickly walked to Yu Fanghe, they wore masks and wore black robes. Obviously they were henchmen of Yu Fanghe. They were also holding two shovels.

Lin Shoujuan said loudly: "Don't bury them! Take their bodies and show them to the villagers of this town. They were the responsible for the fire here and chancellor Yu has punished them accordingly. Also inform them that chancellor Yu will investigate and try to recover the compensation for their losses."

The two men bowed and said: "I understand."

A voice from a burnt house said: "Marvellous! Someone has to pay for the lost of their homes."

Lin Shoujuan yelled: "Who is it! Reveal yourself!"

The voice said: "Mr. Lin, don't be startled. I am just a harmless old woman, Mr. Lin can easily kill an old woman like me."

Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er recognized the voice, it was that horrible granny Hu. Zhu Lei'Er gritted her teeth with anger and hate, Yu Peiyu knew that she hated this old woman very much and would love to kill her on the spot. He gently took her hand and pulled her closer to him, he felt that her hand was very cold. His heart was filled with tender affection for her. He held on to her hand and didn't let go. Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and didn't dare to look at Yu Peiyu now. But her hand was not cold anymore in fact she was feeling very hot, like she was on fire. However Yu Peiyu did not notice this change.

Granny Hu slowly walked to Yu Fanghe and entourage and she was chewing on some beans.

She laughed: "Teethless people love to chew on beans for some reason. Must be the funny sound we make, don't you think so too?"

Lin Shoujuan who originally wanted to silence this talker now stood still and slowly observed granny Hu.

As an experienced martial arts expert he knew that this old woman must be a famous expert too. He turned to Yu Fanghe for advice.

Yu Fanghe's face changed a bit and managed to smile with difficulty: "Madame, are you....."

Before he could finish, granny Hu interrupted: "Mr. Yu, don't be friendly and courteous with me. I'm just an old woman, I will die if the chancellor of Wulin would treat me with such respect."

She now turned to Lin Shoujuan and said: "Mr. Lin is not only a famous swordsman but he is also a very capable orator."

Lin Shoujuan smiled forcibly: "Madame, you're too kind."

Granny Hu just giggled and continued: "The place where I'm standing used to be the general convenience store in this town. Although it was a small shop but it was still worth about 3500 taels of silver. I think if I added all those shops, houses together I think you should pay about a few thousand taels of gold. Do you agree with me?"

Lin Shoujuan said: "I think so too."

Granny Hu continued: "But saying chancellor Yu will investigate and try to recover their losses is just putting the blame on someone else. That way chancellor Yu won't have to pay even one tael of silver."

Lin Shoujuan and the other men's face changed, but Yu Fanghe smiled: "In that case I will pay Madame a large sum now. Just to compensate for your losses."

Granny Hu giggled: "Madame? I'm not married yet, nobody likes an old hag like me. And now nobody will love me either."

Yu Fanghe laughed: "In that case. Miss, what do you want? I will see what I can do for you."

Granny Hu laughed loudly: "Miss?!? I haven't heard that in about 60 years now. I'm feeling all weak now just hearing

you call me Miss. I will let you go just because of that.”

Yu Fanghe was still smiling, but a few of those martial artists looked annoyed.

Shadowless Du Fei angrily scoffed: “The chancellor is a great man, who doesn’t want to lower himself to your level. Old crone, if you’re wise leave now!”

Granny Hu smiled: “I wouldn’t dare to be rude against the chancellor and all the heroes here. Just Du Fei alone can handle me.”

Du Fei grunted.

Granny Hu sighed: “But I’ve lived long enough. Great Mr. Du, please kill me.”

Du Fei looked at Yu Fanghe, who remained emotionless. Du Fei saw that the old woman was still chewing beans and looked really like she wanted to be killed.

Du Fei laughed dryly: “Since you know my name, you must know you’re no match for me. I don’t like to kill old women, I don’t want to be mocked by friends.”

Granny Hu laughed loudly: “I used to think that Du Fei was a real man. But now....he is even too afraid to kill old woman. I think his friends will laugh at him for being such a coward.”

Long Beard Xiang and Lin Shoujuan both smiled when they heard that.

Du Fei felt humiliated, he knew that this old woman must know a thing or two. But he didn’t care anymore. He yelled: “Don’t blame me, old crone! You sought this upon yourself!”

He was called Shadowless Du Fei, his art of levitation was very high and he had already drew his sabre. He was storming towards granny Hu at very fast speed.

Before they knew it, they saw Du Fei about to hack granny Hu. But suddenly Du Fei dropped his sabre, his hands clutched to his throat and was breathing heavily. He looked very angry.

Everyone didn't understand what was going on. Granny Hu sighed: "Silly child! Just because I gave you a bean that doesn't mean you have to spare me."

Now they understood, when Du Fei roared this old woman shot a bean in his mouth."

Everyone was surprised and shocked. Yu Peiyu thought: This granny Hu is even better than Tang Wushuang.

Suddenly he realised that the fake Tang Wushuang wasn't here. Too many thing happened in these two days, that fake Tang Wushuang was his only lead.

Zhu Lei'Er saw that Yu Peiyu was sweating heavily and his hand was very cold. She used her sleeve to gently wipe away his sweat. But he was in a trance.

However Du Fei was sweating even more, he clutched his throat and said: "Bean.....bean....."

Granny Hu laughed: "Is it stuck? Well, cough it out!"

Du Fei put his finger in this throat and tried to vomit, but his hand was too big. He could only fit three fingers in there. He tried to use his fingers to scrape out the bean, but it only made it worse. He's choking and coughing.

Suddenly he had spasms, he fell down and blood came out of the corners of his mouth. He was waving his arms in the air, blood splattered everywhere around him. There were only two fingers on one hand, he bit off his own fingers during his seizure.

Long Beard Xiang wanted to help him out and stepped forward, but he quickly stepped back again. He turned to Lin Shoujuan and said: "The bean.....there must be poison on it."

Lin Shoujuan nodded.

They could hear a gargling sound, it was Du Fei. He was choking on his own fingers. Everyone was frightened by this type of poison and didn't dare to speak now.

Granny Hu laughed at Du Fei: "Those beans are very tasty, I wonder how they taste with those fingers. I must admire you for trying out this new method of eating beans. Unfortunately I cannot taste such delicacy."

Everyone saw the blood on Du Fei's face and the awfully gargling sound he was making. Everyone felt sick and after granny Hu's words they even felt worse. Long Beard Xiang couldn't help it anymore and threw up.

At this point Du Fei's arms to stop waving, and the gargling noise slowly died out.

They saw that there was still blood oozing out of his fingers, but it was as black as ink.

Granny Hu said softly: "It is amazing that Shadowless Du Fei couldn't cope with a mere bean."

Yu Fanghe sighed deeply: "Granny Hu is here....."

Everyone shrieked when they heard granny Hu's name. She turned to Yu Fanghe and said: "It seems that you've just recognized me."

Yu Fanghe apologized: "Forgive me. I should have guessed it was Madame Hu all along."

Granny Hu looked at him for some time, her usual wicked face was gone. She looked surprised and shocked, it was like the first time she saw Yu Fanghe.

Yu Fanghe was still smiling but he felt uneasy being stared at by her.

Granny Hu shook her head and sighed: "Just awhile ago, you wanted Du Fei to kill me. Now he is dead and you're still pretending. You're some formidable man, even I don't know what you're thinking."

Yu Fanghe smiled: "I really do not....."

Granny Hu scoffed: "You don't know me! Twenty years ago we have met before. Anyone who has seen me once will

never forget my ugly face. And besides we can even be considered friends.”

Yu Fanghe couldn't smile anymore. Nobody noticed except Yu Peiyu.....

Zhu Lei'Er felt that his hand was warm again and noticed his heart was beating very fast and his body was shaking.

Granny Hu said: “Why pretend not to know me?”

Yu Peiyu almost bursted out: He doesn't recognize you because he isn't the real Yu Fanghe. Twenty years ago you met my father, this man is an imposter.

He used with tremendous difficulty to surpress that urge. He looked like he was in pain. Zhu Lei'Er shivered when she saw his face like that. She had never seen him in such pain before.

Yu Fanghe laughed loudly: “Twenty years ago....I forgot about what happened twenty years ago a very long time ago. And I do not wish to remember those events. Why should you also remember those issues?”

Granny Hu said coldly: “I will never forget that event.”

Yu Fanghe's laugh was also dying out and he felt very uneasy when he heard granny Hu's words.

Yu Fanghe laughed dryly: “So you want to settle that score today, don't you?”

Granny Hu looked at him for some time and said: “You're right. I do want to settle that score. You must know that I tend to repay my enemies and let us not forget to add the twenty years of interest.”

She was still chewing on beans and looked at Yu Fanghe in a strange manner.

Lin Shoujuan loudly said: “Madame, you shouldn't forget the present status of master Yu.”

Granny Hu said: “What status?”

Lin Shoujuan said sternly: "Master Yu is now the chancellor of Wulin, if you deliberately make things difficult for chancellor Yu. You will become the common enemy of Wulin."

Granny Hu giggled: "The entire Wulin? I just see the five of you, I'm confident that an old woman like me can handle the likes of you."

Lin Shoujuan grabbed his sword tightly, Long Beard Xiang looked nervous. Both were sweating now.

Long Beard Xiang backed away a bit and said: "Madame Hu, I would not dream of interfering between you and chancellor Yu."

Granny Hu said calmly: "Now there were four."

A man next to Xiang stepped forward and said: "I am not busybody either. And I will not question the affairs of Wulin seniors."

Granny Hu said: "Three."

Another man said: "I fully agree with brother Song. I too am not a busybody."

Granny Hu laughed: "Only two. Chancellor Yu does know how to make good friends."

Lin Shoujuan wanted to attack now, but Yu Fanghe grabbed his hand and shook his head.

Lin Shoujuan asked: "Chancellor, you want to engage her first?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "She doesn't want to fight us yet. If she wanted that, she wouldn't waste her time talking to us."

Lin Shoujuan was still hesitating, granny Hu laughed: "It seems you became chancellor because you have some talents. Right, I'm still talking to you because I want you to answer a few questions. You cannot escape me now, so I suggest you would cooperate."

Yu Fanghe asked: "What is that you want to know?"

Granny Hu said: "These men are all famous people from the orthodox schools, but to be honest they are just a bunch of losers. Why did you deliberately trick Hong Lianhua, Jun Haitang and others to leave this place? And why are you here again?"

Yu Fanghe stayed quiet for a minute and said slowly: "Do you not know my motives?"

Granny Hu said: "I want you to confirm my suspicions."

Yu Fanghe said: "I'm looking for something extremely valuable. I take it that granny already knows this."

Granny Hu said: "If you would find this object, will you share it with me?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "I will share it with everyone present."

Granny Hu picked up a shovel and threw it at Long Beard Xiang and yelled: "What are you waiting for? Dig!"

The men started to dig now, and after some time a few of them started to pant heavily. Their expensive brocades were soaked with their sweat.

One of the sighed softly: "If word would get out that the head of the The Tranquil Distance Armed Guard Agency, Han Dayuan and the young keeper of the Myriad Wood Manor Song Hongxing are doing this sort of degrading jobs..... (*sigh). We would become the laughing stock of Wulin."

Song Hongxing was embarrassed by his remark and smiled forcibly: "But we agreed to do this."

Han Dayuan said softly: "We agreed to do this out of our free will. But I'm afraid that if we found that item.....They will forget about our efforts."

He looked around and saw that granny Hu and Yu Fanghe were standing very far away from them. He felt a bit relieved.

Song Hongxing saw that those two were very far away, so he said softly: "But why would he invite us over? If he isn't

planning to share.....”

Han Dayuan whispered: “He is just looking for a few workers.”

Song Hongxing wiped away his sweat and said softly: “Yu Fanghe doesn’t seem like that kind of man.”

Han Dayuan scoffed softly: “That’s what I thought too, but after seeing what he did to Lei Feng. I fear our fates will be similar to Lei Feng.”

He turned to Long Beard Xiang and said: “Old Xiang, did you hear me?”

Long Beard Xiang wiped his sweat and said: “Yes, I heard you. But what can we do now.”

Lin Shoujuan yelled loudly: “Did you find something?”

Xiang answered: “Nothing, nothing yet.”

Granny Hu coldly said: “I suggest you would put more effort in it, or else.....”

Xiang retorted: “But what if that thing isn’t here.”

Granny Hu said casually: “If it isn’t here, I will bury you three into that hole.”

At this point Zhu Lei’Er whispered: “They can’t hear us now, right?”

Yu Peiyu nodded.

Zhu Lei’Er said softly: “What are they looking for? My mother has not hidden anything here. She just wanted to become an ordinary housewife.”

Yu Peiyu said: “They aren’t looking for jewelry and such.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “How come?”

Yu Peiyu said: “If they were they could have taken that parcel we left behind. It was full of invaluable.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “But we wrapped it tightly with a few layers of cloth.”

Yu Peiyu said: "With their Wulin experience and eyesight, they're bound to see what was in the parcel."

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and said: "What could it be?"

Yu Peiyu didn't answer her, because he didn't know the answer either."

The three men had already dug a deep hole, but there was still no trace of the object they wanted.

They just found some wood, dirt and after digging further they were a bit worried.

Lin Shoujuan asked: "Could it be that Zhu Mei didn't hide that object here?"

Granny Hu said: "She took it with her and it must be here."

Lin Shoujuan asked: "Madame, why are you so certain?"

Granny Hu scolded: "Idiot, anyone with half a brain can figure that out."

Yu Fanghe explained: "Dongfang Meiyu knew that she hid that item here, that's why he didn't leave her. Dongfang Daming used the item to lure Heavenly King Li and the others over to assist him."

Lin Shoujuan was puzzled and asked: "But why didn't Zhu Mei use that item in her own benefit. Why hide it?"

Granny Hu sneered: "She just wanted to become a good wife and an excellent mother. If a woman really loves a man she will occasionally do the most strangest things."

Suddenly granny Hu, Yu Fanghe and Lin Shoujuan turned around they heard the noise of a carriage riding their way.

Zhu Lei'Er whispered: "I think I know what they're looking for."

Yu Peiyu just said: "Hmmm?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "They must be looking for some secret powerful martial arts codex. My mother must have found that codex but did not have the time to study it. She must

have hidden it here somewhere, however Dongfang Meiyu found out about this secret.”

Yu Peiyu kept nodding when he heard that reasonable explanation, he couldn't come up with a better explanation than hers.

After she was finished the carriage had almost reached Yu Fanghe and others. There were 16 horses pulling the carriage, and the carriage was the most biggest carriage anyone has seen. It was bigger than an ordinary house.

Yu Fanghe frowned and asked: “Did you secure this place?”

Lin Shoujuan answered: “I've instructed our men to surround the village.”

Yu Fanghe said: “But why is this carriage here? Have they fallen asleep during their watch? They should have stopped this carriage and if they failed they should send out the alarm.”

The carriage stopped, and a voice inside laughed: “Don't blame those men! They did wanted to release a signal but before they could, their heads were chopped off. If someone was to lose his head, he isn't very capable of doing anything anymore.”

The voice sounded very friendly, funny. One would almost believe the voice belonged to the friendly bloke next door.

But granny Hu's face changed, she looked terrified.

She wanted to leave as soon as she heard the laughter. But she couldn't just leave the item behind.

But now it was too late, the doors of the carriage were opened, ten strong muscular men carried a large bed outside.

The bed was the largest anyone had seen before, and lying on the bed was the fattest man one has ever seen before.

Furthermore they were a dozen plates of delicacies on the bed and the fat man was eating happily.

Yu Fanghe and others weren't smiling anymore. This man was disgustingly fat, it was like he was one big lump of talking blob of fat.

Long Beard Xiang, Song Hongxing and Han Dayuan got out of the hole and were bemused to see this fatty.

The fat man laughed: "I think I would be the fattest man in the history of China. If there was a competition who the fattest man was, I would win it for sure. Do you agree?"

Granny Hu couldn't laugh at this joke, in fact it seemed like she aged a lot in a matter of seconds.

The fat man laughed: "Why aren't you laughing? Isn't it funny to see a fatty like me?"

Granny Hu managed to produce a smile on her face and said: "I don't see a fatty. Is there a fat man here? Why can't I see him?"

The fat man said: "I'm just standing here. Can't you see me?"

Granny Hu smiled: "Sir, you're just a bit muscular. You can't be considered fat."

The fat man angrily shouted: "What! Do you think every fatty doesn't like to be called fat! I don't need you flattering to me."

Granny Hu sort felt relieved to see him angry and smiled apologetically: "I'm just telling the truth."

The fat man shook his head and said: "You're lying. I should really cut off your tongue."

But he sighed: "But I'm just too fat and I'm too lazy to move. Do me a favour and cut off your own tongue. No, your nose will also do."

This fat man was actually telling people to cut off their tongues or noses and he sounded like he was engaging in pleasant conversation. Everyone thought he was mad.

Granny Hu took away the sword from Lin Shoujuan and immediately cut off her own nose.

Her nose fell on the ground and she ran away as fast as possible.

Lin Shoujuan and others were too shocked to say or laugh.

The fat man laughed: "What a stupid old woman! Why did she cut off her own nose? Don't you think that was hilarious?"

Xiang, Song, etc. looked at each other and couldn't laugh. The fat man sighed: "These men don't have a sense of humour."

He pointed at Song Hongxing and asked: "What's your name?"

Song Hongxing stuttered: "My.....na.....name.....is..... Song.....Hongxing."

The fat man said: "Why won't you laugh? I remember seeing you smiling earlier."

Song Hongxing tried his best to smile or laugh but it looked like he was crying now.

The fat man sighed: "You don't know the first thing of humour. Do me a favour cut off your own ears."

If someone else would say this to Song Hongxing he would become very angry and laughed at the arrogance of that person.

But now he didn't know what to do. He knew that this fatty must be quite lethal otherwise granny Hu wouldn't run away like that.

But he wasn't too keen either to cut off his own ears. And he thought: I certainly can't defeat you, but I can try and run away.

He quickly used his best form of the art of levitation to get away from the fatty.

The fat man laughed: "Look he is running from me. Why?"

Song Hongxing can be ranked as a first rate expert of this era and by the time the fat man laughed he was already 20 metres away from him.

Everyone was certain that this fat man couldn't catch up with Song anymore.

Suddenly he saw a silver flash flying towards Song with incredible speed, and the silver object made a turn and flew back to the fat man. They saw it was just a silver plate.

Song Hongxing was still running, but after two extra paces his upper body fell off. And blood gushed out of his lower body like a fountain.

His legs walked another two steps before the lower body fell too.

Everyone was horrified, the fat man used the plate to slice the body of Song in two halves.

They had never seen such martial arts before.

The fat man laughed: "Isn't that funny? Do you see that? That body still walked another two steps. It is hilarious, isn't it?"

Before he could finish Han Dayuan already laughed very loudly.

The fat man said: "Someone is finally laughing. What's your name?"

Han Dayuan stuttered: "Han.....Dayuan."

The fat man smiled: "You laughed so loudly. You must find me very entertaining."

Han Dayuan said quickly: "Yes, a fat man like you is very entertaining."

The fat man laughed: "You have a sense of humour. I like that in a man. Say, can you do me a favour."

Something snapped inside Han Dayuan and he screamed:
“You.....you.....want.....me.....to do you a fav.....favour?”

The fat man laughed: “Of course you, who else?”

Han Dayuan leapt up and cursed: “You damn fat pig!
I...I...Take this!”

He raised his shovel and stormed towards the fat man. He hit the fat man with full force with the shovel. But there was no hole in him, in fact his fat sort of absorbed the shovel. Han Dayuan tried his best to pull out the shovel from the fat man, however in vain.

The fatty casually slapped Han Dayuan, and Han flew backwards and made a few somersaults in mid-air. When he landed his head was mutilated beyond recognition.

Long Beard Xiang was called the Invincible Fists but he had never seen or dreamt that such prowess existed.

The fat man turned to him and asked: “What’s your name?”

Xiang knelt down and said: “My family name is Xiang. Sir, if you want me to cut off my ears I will cut them off. If you want me to cut off my nose I will do so. I won’t run and won’t resist.”

The fat man sighed: “Initially I wanted you to cut off that long beard of yours. But if you really want to cut off your nose and ears, by all means.”

Xiang collapsed on the ground, he could almost cry.

The fatty said: “Well, what are you waiting for?”

Xiang gritted his teeth and drew his sabre and cut off his nose and ears.

He fainted of the pain.

The fatty turned to Yu Fanghe and smiled: “I hear that you’re the present chancellor of Wulin.”

Yu Fanghe said: “That is right.”

Yu Fanghe still remained calm and dignified, both Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er admired his strong will.

The fat man smiled: "You do have something of a chancellor in you. Could you do me a favour?"

This time it was Yu Fanghe's turn. Yu Peiyu tightly held on to Zhu Lei'Er's hand. He didn't know whether he should be happy or excited.

He wanted to see the imposter dead for a very long time, but he wasn't too keen to see him die at the hands of another. But he had no choice, because he too realised he was no match for that fatty.

Yu Fanghe smiled: "If the famous Tian Chixing The Day Eats The Constellation has something troubling him. I'm most willing to help."

Tian Chixing was a bit startled and asked: "How do you know my name?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "I have heard of your fame and appearances for a very long time. It is indeed a honour to finally meet you. The Star Constellation devours everything, he has eaten countless martial artists. His stomach can hold a thousand people."

Tian Chixing asked seriously: "Who told you that?"

Yu Fanghe used his hand to make a gesture, unfortunately both Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er couldn't see what that sign was.

Yu Peiyu saw the startled expression on Tian Chixing's face, Tian Chixing asked earnestly: "You...you recognize that person?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "That person doesn't dislike me, so we became quite close."

Tian Chixing grabbed something from a plate and started to eat, he was called the world's biggest omnivore for a reason.

He smiled: "Since you know that crazy person I won't ask you to do me a favour. But I do have a few questions."

Yu Fanghe said politely: "Ask away, sir."

Tian Chixing said: "Feng San helped out the late Zhu Mei once and that's why he lived here for some time. Is that true?"

Yu Fanghe nodded and said: "Yes."

Tian Chixing asked: "Where is he now? Did he die in the fire?"

Yu Fanghe shook his head and said: "We didn't find the remains of Feng San, in fact nobody died in this fire."

Tian Chixing frowned and said: "I hear that Zhu Mei managed to get hold of something. It is said that whoever owns that item will rule Wulin. Is that correct?"

Yu Fanghe smiled: "True too."

Tian Chixing asked: "So you were looking for that item earlier, right? And have you found it?"

Yu Fanghe replied: "Yes, we're looking for it. But we haven't found it yet."

Tian Chixing smiled: "Why won't you continue to dig?"

Lin Shoujuan and Yu Fanghe looked at each other and smiled wryly. They both picked up the shovels and started to dig, they dug and dug and even struck a water source.

Lin Shoujuan and Yu Fanghe were soaked and Yu smiled wryly: "Still nothing."

Tian Chixing said seriously: "Zhu Mei must have hidden it somewhere else."

Yu Fanghe sighed: "I believe so too."

Tian Chixing laughed: "It is better that way, otherwise that thing will only cause trouble."

He started to laugh very happily.

Yu Fanghe coughed and asked: "Do you have anymore requests, sir? If not we will take our leave."

Tian Chixing laughed: "Nope! Go, quickly leave! My head hurts when I think of that strange character."

Yu Fanghe and Lin Shoujuan swiftly left this place, Yu Peiyu shook his head and sighed when he saw those two escaping that easily.

Chapter 23 : Who Is To Blame?

Zhu Lei'Er frowned: "Tian Chixing said this person came from the EchoValley. But I've never heard of the valley before, third uncle never mentioned it to me. Tian Chixing is not even afraid of my third uncle and he ran as fast he could when he heard of the Echo valley. That sign Yu Fanghe made to Tian Chixing could that refer to them."

After Yu Fanghe and Lin Shoujuan were gone for some time, Tian Chixing laughed: "It is very hot and stuffy under there. Come out now."

Except for those men who carried the bed, there was no one here. Yu Peiyu didn't know who he was talking to. Tian Chixing pointed at their location, now Yu Peiyu was scared out of his wits. He knew that they were discovered by him.

Zhu Lei'Er mumbled softly: "It is said that fat people are quite useless. This one must be an exception."

She crawled out the furnace, Yu Peiyu couldn't stop her. She was a very bold young girl.

Tian Chixing was surprised to see a beautiful young girl coming out.

Zhu Lei'Er walked in front of him and smiled: "Wow! So many delicious dishes. Can I have some I am quite hungry."

Without waiting for his answer she took an apple from the plate and started eating.

Tian Chixing looked at her and asked: "Aren't you afraid of me?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Why should I be afraid of a funny and friendly man like you."

Tian Chixing said: "Didn't you see me kill those men?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "A great hero like you, wouldn't kill a young girl like me. I'm very assured."

Tian Chixing laughed: "Very amusing! Such a sweet tongue and at your age. Old crone Hu can learn a few things from you. You're so adorable, you can even be my daughter."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Being your daughter is quite nice, I think. I can eat everything I want and nobody will bully me."

Tian Chixing laughed: "Enough flattering already. Tell the other person to come out too. Who is it anyway?"

Zhu Lei'Er giggled: "Do you think he is afraid of you? You're wrong. Do you know who he is?"

Tian Chixing laughed: "Having a lover at your young age."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Don't spout nonsense. My fourth uncle is a very gentle man, but when he's angry even my third uncle is a bit afraid of him."

Tian Chixing asked: "Who is your third uncle?"

Zhu Lei'Er said casually: "You've heard of him too, you even mentioned his name."

Tian Chixing was startled and shocked and said: "F...Feng San is your uncle?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "You must know about my third uncle's abilities."

Tian Chixing clapped his fat hands and laughed: "Hilarious! The brother of Feng San is hiding in the furnace."

Yu Peiyu was still in there and didn't come out. Zhu Lei'Er was surprised because she knew that Yu Peiyu wasn't a coward. There must be a reason why he was still there.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "How dare you to be rude against my third uncle and fourth uncle!"

Tian Chixing laughed: "That is some joke, me afraid? Afraid of Feng San? Some joke."

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit surprised, this was the first time she saw someone not being afraid of her third uncle.

Before she could speak again a voice from the furnace said: "That is some joke, me afraid? Afraid of Feng San? Some joke."

His voice and laughter sounded exactly the same like Tian Chixing.

Zhu Lei'Er was shocked, that wasn't the voice of Yu Peiyu. But if it wasn't Yu Peiyu who was there now.

Tian Chixing was also taken by that voice, he managed to put a smile and said: "Why are you imitating me? Come out!"

The voice laughed too: "Why are you imitating me? Come out!"

Tian Chixing shrieked with fear: "Who....who are you?"

The voice shrieked too in the same way: "Who....are you?"

Tian Chixing was stunned and after a moment he composed himself and shouted: "I am a bastard! I am an idiot! I only know how to mimic the voices of others."

The voice from the furnace said: "I am a bastard! I am an idiot! I only know how to mimic the voices of others."

Tian Chixing said: "The most despicable and vile man on this world is the Parrot of Echo Valley."

The voice said: "The most despicable and vile man on this world is the Parrot of Echo Valley."

Whatever Tian Chixing cursed this Parrot would repeat. Zhu Lei'Er was quite amused but when she thought about it was quite eerie. Someone repeating every word you say.

Tian Chixing was sweating like a pig now, he screamed: "If...if you keep repeating my words. I will kill you!"

The Parrot repeated: "If...if you keep repeating my words. I will kill you!"

Tian Chixing yelled: "You.....you....."

The Parrot repeated: "You.....you....."

Tian Chixing stormed back into his carriage, his carriers followed and the carriage rode away from this place like they were being pursued by some monster.

Zhu Lei'Er was too surprised and the Parrot stopped repeating anything now. She walked back to the furnace and called: "Fourth uncle!"

But no one answered, it seems that Yu Peiyu wasn't there anymore. But when she took a look, she saw Yu Peiyu still in there.

She smiled: "So it was you, fourth uncle. That was most impressive, you gave that fat man quite a scare."

Yu Peiyu didn't answer; he just looked at Zhu Lei'Er.

Zhu Lei'Er was shocked and asked: "What's wrong?"

She pushed him but he had no reaction, his acupoints were sealed.

She also noticed there was a hole in the furnace at the other side.

Luckily Zhu Lei'Er learnt the skills to seal and unseal acupoints from Feng San. Feng San knew all the different types of sealing acupoints techniques in the world.

She unsealed Yu's acupoints and asked: "Fourth uncle, what happened? Who came by?"

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply and said: "Someone did come by. But I didn't see who it was."

When he wanted to follow Zhu Lei'Er out, someone sealed his acupoints.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That person must have punched a hole through the furnace."

Yu Peiyu nodded.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Didn't you hear something? There is a hole in the wall behind you."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "I did not hear a thing. The bricks around the furnace are very hard, but this person punched a hole through like it was tofu."

Zhu Lei'Er was very scared to know that this person had such powerful palm energy. She asked: "What happened?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Someone crawled in the furnace and stayed behind me."

Zhu Lei'Er said with surprise: "That hole is very small. He can't fit through there."

Yu Peiyu said: "This man must have reached the highest level of the Skeleton Shrinking Skill."

This skill wasn't a very amazing technique, usually some ordinary thieves would have learnt something of this skill. But the level of this mysterious person was unbelievable.

Zhu Lei'Er was silent for awhile and asked: "That's when he started to repeat the words of Tian Chixing."

Yu Peiyu nodded: "Exactly."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Did you see how he looked like?"

Yu Peiyu shook his head and sighed: "No, unfortunately not. I couldn't turn around to see his face."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "That person must be very agile."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "This man is truly awesome."

Zhu Lei'Er frowned: "Tian Chixing said this person came from the EchoValley. But I've never heard of the valley before, third uncle never mentioned it to me. Tian Chixing is not even afraid of my third uncle and he ran as fast he could when he heard of the Echo valley. That sign Yu Fanghe made to Tian Chixing could that refer to them."

Yu Peiyu looked very troubled and repeated: "EchoValley? EchoValley? What place is that?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Even if I knew where that place was, I will never go there. My heaven! Someone repeating my every word I will go mad."

The mere thought of it was quite frightening, she didn't want to think of it anymore.

Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er now heard some soft moaning sounds. Zhu Lei'Er held on to Yu Peiyu's hand, they carefully walked closer to look and they saw a man covered in blood standing up.

His face and clothes were covered in blood, if it wasn't for his long beard no one would know who he was.

Zhu Lei'Er was relieved to see it was only Long Beard Xiang. She whispered: "He is still alive, Long Beard Xiang."

Yu Peiyu wanted to tend to his wounds, but when he noticed that Xiang was behaving suspiciously he stopped.

Xiang began to laugh wickedly, his mad laughter made him look even more ghastly.

A man without a nose and ears is a terrible sight, but a man with no ears and a nose laughing like a lunatic is even more terrible.

Zhu Lei'Er held on to Yu Peiyu's hand even more tightly.

Xiang said happily: "Yu Fanghe....Yu Fanghe, I've won from you. I have found it, you did not."

He jumped back into the hole they dug.

Zhu Lei'Er whispered happily: "He must have found the object. He is going to hide the thing back there again."

Yu Peiyu was a bit happy too, Zhu Lei'Er and he swiftly moved over to the hole.

They saw old Xiang sitting in the hole like an old child, his hands were tightly around a small metallic box.

He was laughing: "It is mine. All mine! I will become invincible, everyone will bow before me. My time for

recognition has finally come.”

Zhu Lei’Er sneered: “Don’t count your chicks before they hatch.”

Old Xiang jumped up and stared evilly at Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei’Er and asked frantically: “What...what do you want?”

Zhu Lei’Er responded: “We just want that little box.”

He put his hands behind his back and said: “What box? What are you talking about?”

Zhu Lei’Er was amused by this childish act of his, but she was also feeling a bit sorry for the old man. She shook his head and sighed: “There is no point in hiding it.”

Xiang jumped up and down and yelled: “It’s mine! I sacrificed my own ears and nose for this small box. You can only have it after you kill me.”

Zhu Lei’Er smiled: “After killing you. That wouldn’t be too much trouble.”

Xiang shouted: “You.....”

Suddenly he fell down with spasms and after awhile he was motionless.

Zhu Lei’Er leapt down and took his pulse and sighed: “He is dead. I never believed that anger could kill.”

Yu Peiyu sighed: “The shock of losing his treasure was too much for him.”

Zhu Lei’Er pouted: “You can’t blame me for that. But I can’t let him keep that box, can I?”

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: “I’m not blaming you. It is his own fault for being greedy.”

Zhu Lei’Er wanted to take the box from him, but Xiang clutched tightly to the box. She had to use a shovel to jack open his hands.

She said softly: “I wonder what is in here. He wouldn’t let go of it even when he is dead.”

There was only a notebook in the small box, and there were no characters in the notebook either. It was available in all the bookshops in the land. And a bamboo tablet with no markings on it.

Zhu Lei'Er was very disappointed and sighed with indignation: "These are treasures. For these little things Yu Fanghe burnt down this entire village? For this all these people died? What? Why?"

She threw the items on the ground and wanted to stamp on it.

Yu Peiyu picked them up and said: "Anyway we went through a lot to get these things. Let's keep them around, as a sort of souvenir."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "Souvenir of what? Of this old man Xiang? I might as well let him keep it."

Yu Peiyu said: "I think there is something to these two objects. Your mother wouldn't secretly burry these two objects if they were useless."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Is there something special to this useless treasure?"

Yu Peiyu smiled and shook his head, Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Fourth uncle, you can have it if you want it. I don't want to keep these useless objects around. I don't people to think I'm some sort of silly dumb girl."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "No matter what, nobody will think you're a silly dumb girl."

Yu Peiyu put the notebook and the bamboo table away in his robe and started to burry the corpses of those men.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed and said: "Fourth uncle, you're really a nice man. Your future wife must be one very lucky girl."

Yu Peiyu sighed too and thought of Lin Daiyu and Jin Yanzi, he remained silent for a moment and said sadly: "I'm an

unfortunate man, everyone will be cast in my misfortune too.”

Zhu Lei’Er blinked her eyes and said: “Does that mean you won’t take me along?” She paused for a minute and lowered her head: “I know that I am an poor orphan and can’t go anywhere. But I don’t want to become your burden, fourth uncle. I will leave.”

Yu Peiyu patted her gently on her back and smiled: “Little girls shouldn’t think too much. Even if I didn’t want to take you along, after hearing you, I will have to change my mind.”

She happily raised her head and smiled: “Where are we going?”

Yu Peiyu didn’t know how to answer her question, because he had no idea too.

He thought for awhile and said softly: “I wonder whether the Tang Clan has discovered that Tang Wushuang is missing. I wonder if Jin Yanzi is still there.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Fourth uncle, are we going to the Tang Manor?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Why not? Let us have a look.”

Zhu Lei’Er clapped her hands in happiness and smiled: “I have heard that the Tang Manor is a very fun and exciting place.”

Suddenly they heard a group of people crying and cursing coming their way. They must be the villagers.

Zhu Lei’Er took Yu Peiyu by his hand and walked the other way.

Outside Family Li Village it was already day, the awful burnt smell and the cries of the villagers couldn’t be smelled or heard.

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Do you think that Yu Fanghe will really pay up?”

Yu Peiyu said: "I think he will. He wants to win support over from all kinds of people."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But they can't compensate for the emotional losses. The pain to see your home destroyed is really very overwhelming."

Yu Peiyu consoled her by saying: "Time will heal everything. And the fond memories of the past will always stay with you."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "You're right. If you keep thinking about the unhappy events in your life, there is no point in living anymore."

It was a very bright and sunny day and the day was filled with hope.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed deeply first but afterwards she smiled: "Anyway I'm still young and alive. The world is a big place and there are so many places I want to see and visit."

She opened up her arms and dashed forward into the wind, Yu Peiyu was very happy to see her smiling and happy again. He too felt cheerful again. However suddenly they heard a soft moaning coming from the tall grass.

A voice sighed: "Young people shouldn't be depressed, only old woman like me....."

She started to cough violently, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er were startled to hear this voice.

Zhu Lei'Er ran back to Yu Peiyu and held on to his hand again and said: "Granny Hu? Is that you?"

Granny Hu coughed and panted: "Yes, it is me. Please give me some water, I beg you. Please be benevolent good sir and Miss."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at her and said: "You, cunning old witch! What are you up to again?"

Granny Hu panted: "Miss, no tricks this time. I am very thirsty....I just want some water. That damn sun....."

Zhu Lei'Er pulled Yu Peiyu's hand and said: "Let's leave! I don't want to see this awfull old woman again."

Seeing granny Hu's face bloody and mutilated, Yu Peiyu felt sorry for her. She tried to get up but fell down again.

She begged: "Young master Yu, I know you're a kind man. Please some water."

Yu Peiyu gently pushed aside Zhu Lei'Er's hand and walked over to granny Hu.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "Old crone, listen carefully. My fourth uncle is a good man. Don't try to trick him, if you do I will cut off your tongue personally."

She too walked over to the tall grass and to a look at granny Hu.

Her mouth was very dry and her clothes were covered with mud and blood.

When she saw Zhu Lei'Er wanted to smile, but when she tried she almost fainted of the pain.

She panted: "Miss, I am too weak now to do anything. How can I harm anyone now?"

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit surprised to see in her in this state but retorted: "That is your own fault for doing all those evil deeds."

Granny Hu said sadly: "I know it is too late to repent now. But if I weren't that old I wouldn't be that weak of a mere wound."

Zhu Lei'Er knew that her weak state wasn't caused by the lost of her nose. In fact the real reason was that she lost the lion's share of her internal power to Feng San and Yu Peiyu. That took a heavy toll on her old body, plus the fact that she lost a lot of blood when she cut off her own nose.

Zhu Lei'Er also felt a bit sad for her now, and wondered why it took Yu Peiyu that long to get some water.

She asked granny Hu: "Of all the people why ask us for water?"

Granny Hu answered: "Maybe because I'm afraid of other people. I only trust a good young man like young master Yu now."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why all the confidence in my fourth uncle?"

Granny Hu said: "Only men like him can make women feel secure and safe. He is to be trusted, although I'm old but I am still a woman."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "It seems you have good taste."

Granny Hu asked: "Why do you call him fourth uncle? He isn't that much older than you."

Zhu Lei'Er ignored her and was playing with some long grass straws.

Granny Hu secretly looked at her and said: "If I were your age and I saw a man like young master Yu, I wouldn't let him go. I will try to do everything possible just to be around him and to marry him. I wouldn't call him fourth uncle."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Do you think I'm old enough to get married?"

Granny Hu said: "Why not? Some girls at your age are mothers already."

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly stood still and was daydreaming, the sun shone on her beautiful face, she was blushing. But she didn't look like a child anymore. Children who grew up under tough circumstances will mature quicker.

Also Zhu Lei'Er didn't hate this old woman that much anymore.

However granny Hu knew exactly what words to say, to make this young girl happy. But why go through all that

trouble? Whenever she spoke she would be in pain, what is she up to?

Yu Peiyu came back with a gourd of water, and he was sweating. He went through some work to get this water.

Granny Hu happily said: "Thank you, young master Yu. Thank you! I knew you are a good man."

Yu Peiyu didn't say anything, he put the gourd in front of her. Granny Hu tried to get up and take the gourd but she fell down again. She couldn't lift a pebble in her present state.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Be careful, if you spill it we won't get you anymore."

Granny Hu panted: "I know.....I know....."

She took the gourd with difficulty but she was really too weak and couldn't hold on to it. Fortunately Zhu Lei'Er quickly caught the gourd.

Zhu Lei'Er said in an irritated tone: "I told you to be careful."

Granny Hu panted: "I know, but.....I didn't know I was that weak. I fear my end is nearing....."

She started to sob now, Zhu Lei'Er sighed and put the gourd to granny Hu's mouth. She immediately drank heartily.

Zhu Lei'Er was amused by her actions and turned around to Yu Peiyu and laughed: "Fourth uncle, look at her. She is just....."

All of a sudden her laughter was gone, she quickly leapt aside and the remaining splattered on granny Hu.

Yu Peiyu went over to Zhu Lei'Er and asked: "What is wrong?"

Zhu Lei'Er angrily cursed: "The ungrateful crone...."

Yu Peiyu didn't trust that old woman for a bit, but he did not notice anything strange about her. But now he was furious and yelled: "What do you want!"

Granny Hu panted: "My nails were too long, I am sorry to have scratched you, Miss."

Yu Peiyu immediately took Zhu Lei'Er's hand and saw a scratch.

He asked: "Is there poison on her nails?"

Zhu Lei'Er nodded and said: "Hmmm."

Yu Peiyu asked softly: "Are you immune to it?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If I took it in, it won't harm me. But now this poison directly entered my bloodstream. I fear....."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply and turned around to face granny Hu. He said very slowly: "What do you want from us?"

Granny Hu panted: "I am very sorry, I didn't mean to. But.....young master Yu, kill me."

Yu Peiyu said coldly: "You know I won't kill you."

Granny Hu laughed loudly: "I know that. I am very old and if a young girl like her can accompany me in the netherworld....."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What are your conditions for the antidote?"

Granny Hu said calmly: "This is one of my best tricks, I won't keep the antidote on me. If she does not take the antidote within the next three days, she will surely die a horrible death."

Yu Peiyu wiped away his sweat and asked: "Where is the antidote?"

Granny Hu laughed: "Listen to my commands and I will give it to you."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "Don't listen to her. Don't let her threaten you!"

She pulled out a short sword out of her sleeve and wanted to chop off her arm.

Yu Peiyu quickly grabbed the sword and said: "What are you doing!"

Zhu Lei'Er explained: "The poison has only travelled through my arm, if I would....."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Silly child! She will give us the antidote, don't worry. Why....why....."

He was impressed and touched by her courage to chop off her own arm.

Zhu Lei'Er wept: "I cannot let fourth uncle to do her every command."

Yu Peiyu was very touched and smiled: "You're willing to sacrifice your arm for me. I will find a way to get the antidote. Don't worry about me."

Granny Hu clapped and laughed: "What a sweet pair of lovebirds! Even the famous Zhu Yingtai and Liang Shanbo* are nothing compared to you."

{*Note: Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai were a famous tragic love couple in ancient China. I believe in the Sui dynasty 581-618 A.D.

Zhu Yingtai dressed up like a man to attend school. Liang fell in love with her, but he thought she was a man. And she fell for him too. Alas, Zhu Yingtai was already engaged to someone else. When Liang finally found out Zhu was really a girl, he was grief-stricken, and Zhu was about to marry into another family. Liang died of sadness, Zhu Yingtai was heartbroken too and she went to his grave and saw that Liang's grave was open and a butterfly flew out of the coffin. She, too turned into a butterfly and flew off with him.}

Zhu Lei'Er blushed and stamped her feet: "Don't talk rubbish in front of my fourth uncle."

Granny Hu giggled: "You're resent me for saying that, but I know in your heart you're very happy. I just said that you and your fourth uncle are a made for each other. You forgot to pay attention to me when I just told you that young master Yu is made for you."

Zhu Lei'Er ran into Yu Peiyu's arms out of embarrassment and said softly: "Don't believe a word she says."

Yu Peiyu coughed and said seriously: "Where is the antidote?"

Granny Hu said: "I have a home too and there is the antidote. If you can bring me back within the next three days, you will receive your reward."

Granny Hu said: "Go and rent a carriage, I will give you the directions."

Granny Hu sat in the carriage and she looked like she was about to die any minute. Her eyes were closed and saliva dripping out of her mouth. It was a disgusting sight, Zhu Lei'Er was very annoyed by her and said angrily: "You sly old witch! You were waiting for us there, weren't you?"

Granny Hu giggled: "Not really, but I hate to pass out on a great opportunity."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at her for some time and smiled: "Thank you! I will repay you somehow for your generosity."

If Zhu Lei'Er said that in a mean way, granny Hu wouldn't be bothered by it. She has heard those lines perhaps thousands of times in her life. But seeing that Zhu Lei'Er was saying those words in this manner she really got goosebumps.

She smiled difficultly: "You shouldn't be angry with me, in fact you should even thank me."

Zhu Lei'Er said with indignation: "Thank you?"

Granny Hu laughed: "If I didn't arrange this little test, you wouldn't know that your fourth uncle cared that much for you."

Yu Peiyu felt a bit embarrassed and coughed dryly, he quickly changed topics and asked: "What unsolved matters do you have with that Yu ...person?"

Granny Hu didn't answer and looked at Yu Peiyu and asked: "Your family name is Yu too. Is he a relative of yours? And

judging by your accent you're both from the same province." Yu Peiyu's heart ached and said: "No, I don't even know him."

Granny Hu laughed: "Well, I suppose I can tell you. Either this Yu Fanghe has gone senile or I am sure this is not the real Yu Fanghe. The Yu Fanghe, we see now is an imposter. I am sure of that."

Yu Peiyu was extremely excited in his heart, finally someone understood believed him. Even if this person was the awful witch granny Hu.

He made a fist and tried not to reveal his emotions and asked casually: "Imposter? I don't think anyone who believes your assumptions."

Granny Hu sighed: "I know that too, nobody will believe me."

Yu Peiyu just said: "Hmmmm?"

Granny Hu continued: "Twenty years ago I met Yu Fanghe. We did not have any unresolved animosities, in fact he saved my life."

Yu Peiyu was surprised and asked: "Saved your life?"

Granny Hu said: "When he saved my life, he didn't know who I was. But afterwards when we exchanged names, he knows. He wasn't sorry for saving me. He even advised not to do so much evil anymore. Good men like him are becoming a rarity. If he mentioned this incident I wouldn't have given him any trouble. However the Yu Fanghe I saw yesterday didn't even know of that incident, he even thought I was an enemy of the real Yu Fanghe. So what do you think? It is most strange."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "It is quite funny."

She casually looked at Yu Peiyu and saw he was emotionless.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Since you know that, why won't you use it against the imposter?"

Granny Hu sighed: "Don't think that the imposter is a weakling. In my opinion the imposter might be even more dangerous than the real Yu Fanghe. Especially when it comes to martial arts."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You haven't fought each other, how do you know?"

Granny Hu said: "Because he keeps a low profile that makes him dangerous. Even I wasn't ill I wouldn't dare to engage him in battle."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "You think he is better than the ten martial arts masters?"

Granny Hu said: "Everyone in Wulin fears the leaders of the prominent schools and sects, don't they?"

Zhu Lei'Er nodded.

Granny Hu said: "Those leaders are very much afraid of the ten of us, correct?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Afraid is a big word, let us say they don't like to see you lot."

Granny Hu said: "But the ten of us aren't that powerful as everyone thinks. There are a few others that exceed us. The reason why I'm still around is that I don't underestimate my adversaries."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If that Yu Fanghe is a martial arts master too, why would he degrade himself to ask master Nu to aid him."

Granny Hu said: "Maybe he doesn't want to expose his true martial arts yet. Furthermore I see that he has big plans and isn't too concerned about doing a few degrading jobs."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Is that the reason why that fat man left him alone, he made a sort sign to him."

Granny Hu quickly asked: "What sign was that?"

Zhu Lei'Er shook her head and said: "I couldn't see."

Granny Hu said softly to herself: "What is wrong these days? Those long lost experts are coming out again. I fear Wulin will become a restless place, if I can survive all of this I will stay home and enjoy my final years in peace....."

Granny Hu slowly closed her eyes and fell asleep, Zhu Lei'Er looked at Yu Peiyu and saw he had his eyes closed too. She sighed and looked outside.

It was a nice day, and they were travelling very fast. Zhu Lei'Er saw that the rider used his whip to speeden the horses.

She was enjoying the scenery, but suddenly she thought of something and her face changed.

How could Yu Peiyu find a carriage that fast and by the looks of the carriage and horses, those were impossible to find in a small town like the Family Li Village.

Zhu Lei'Er asked softly: "Fourth uncle, where did you rent this carriage?"

But Yu Peiyu was sound asleep, in the beginning she thought he was just pretending. But she shook him a bit, he was still asleep.

Zhu Lei'Er pushed him a bit harder and said in his ear: "Wake up! There is something wrong with this carriage."

Yu Peiyu opened his eyes for a moment and mumbled: "What is wrong with the carriage....."

But he fell asleep again, granny Hu was snoring.

Zhu Lei'Er panicked and called out: "Sir, could you stop the carriage please? I feel a bit sick."

The rider laughed: "If you're sick just sleep a bit. You will feel a bit better."

The rider was an extremely ugly fellow, he looked even uglier when he laughed. Zhu Lei'Er tried to open the doors, but she was too weak now.

Zhu Lei'Er yelled: "Who sent you? What do you want from us?"

She now understood that Yu Peiyu and granny Hu were knocked out by intoxicating incense. Because she was rather immune to all kinds of poisons, she remained awake. But the incense was having an effect on her too.

She thought: It must be Yu Fanghe.

She noticed that there was a white smoke emitting from the roof, she held her breath and took out a silver blade and wanted to disperse the smoke with her palms. But she was too weak now and when she stood up she fell down again.

At this moment a piece of the roof fell down, because they riding on a bumpy mountain path. There was a secret compartment in the carriage. These people must have hidden the intoxicating incense in there.

Zhu Lei'Er saw that the incense was almost burnt up, it was ingenious of these people to hide the incense there. They could even knock out an expert like granny Hu and a cautious man like Yu Peiyu.

With difficulty she went over to the secret compartment.

She blew out the incense and hid it in her sleeve, she also saw a sack there. When she touched it, it was soft and she opened to see what was in it. It was a young woman, Silver Blossom. She was put in the sack here.

Zhu Lei'Er was sure that Yu Fanghe was behind this, Silver Blossom was also unconscious. Zhu Lei'Er pretended to pass out too.

The carriage rode very fast and it seemed that they were riding over a bumpier road now.

Slowly the carriage slowed down, and Zhu Lei'Er heard a man saying: "Eldest martial arts brother, sorry to have troubled you."

This man helped the rider down, the rider was this so-called [eldest martial arts brother]. Was he the head disciple of Yu Fanghe, but to Zhu Lei'Er's knowledge Yu Fanghe hasn't accepted any disciples yet.

The eldest brother grunted. The other man smiled: "Have you found the second Miss?"

The eldest brother slapped him and scolded: "That is none of your business."

The man smiled apologetically: "Yes, forgive me. I will keep my tongue in the future."

The eldest brother grunted: "I have also brought back three other persons for the hierarch. They will serve as sacrifices and tie them to the altar. Tie second Miss to the altar too."

The man obeyed his commands.

Zhu Lei'Er thought: Why is this [eldest martial arts brother] so fierce to his other martial arts brothers? Judging by his words he seem to know Silver Blossom, do they belong to the same sect? Are there any connections with them and Yu Fanghe?

Zhu Lei'Er did not know that Silver Blossom belonged to the Heavenly Silkworm Sect and they did not have any links with Yu Fanghe.

A few men opened the door of the carriage, Zhu Lei'Er secretly looked at these men. They were all hideous, even Zhu Lei'Er was shocked to see them. They said: "Why is the second Miss injured?"

"Are these people responsible for that? Who are they?"

"Look the old crone, she doesn't have a nose. And look at that girl."

"She is pretty, unfortunately a bit too young for my taste."

One of those ruffians pinched her cheek lightly.

She was disgusted that this ugly man touched her, she almost threw up.

One said: "Hurry up! Otherwise eldest martial arts brother will be angry again."

When they heard he said [eldest martial arts brother] they shut up and carried them away.

A man asked: "Second martial arts brother, do we tie second Miss to the altar too?"

The second martial arts brother said: "Those were the orders of the eldest brother."

The man sighed: "Second Miss has always been favoured by the hierarch. Will she receive the ultimate punishment too?"

Zhu Lei'Er secretly saw that this cave was lightened and decorated with all kinds of strange statues.

There were fires everywhere and small boxes next to the fires. You could hear hissing sounds from those boxes. It was obvious that in those boxes were snakes and such.

Yu Peiyu, Zhu Lei'Er, Silver Blossom and granny Hu were tied to the altar.

Zhu Lei'Er saw that the eldest brother coming out, he was wearing an expensive robe and had a fan in his hand.

He looked very distinguished, but if you saw his face you would be horrified.

His face was mutilated beyond words; he was missing half a nose, there were countless bite marks in his face.

Also he only had four fingers in total, right hand three. And on his left hand only one.

The other men respectfully called: "Eldest martial arts brother, we await your orders."

He just grunted and looked viciously at Yu Peiyu and others. He laughed evilly: "They should be awake now."

He opened his fan and waved to them, Zhu Lei'Er could smell a foul air. Zhu Lei'Er wasn't feeling woozy anymore and Yu Peiyu and others instantly woke up.

The eldest martial arts brother laughed at granny Hu: "The famous granny Hu has been outsmarted by me, Sang Erlang."

Yu Peiyu and granny Hu stayed calm when they heard him, Zhu Lei'Er deliberately said loudly: "Who are you? What do you want from us?"

Sang Erlang used his fan to point at Zhu Lei'Er and said: "You're the daughter of the Keeper of the Palace of Enchantment?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Aha! Since you already know who I am, I suggest you will let me go now."

Sang Erlang scoffed: "You really have a sharp tongue little girl. But if you would open your mouth one more time, I will slap you very, very hard."

Zhu Lei'Er immediately remained quiet. She knew that experts like master Nu and Madame Hai Tang would try to uphold their statuses and not slap a young girl. But she knew that men like San Erlang would do almost anything.

Sang Erlang asked: "Are you Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, I am."

Sang Erlang smiled: "Very handsome! Not surprising that our Three Magnificent Flower Ladies would fall for you. I used to be very handsome too and after awhile I will make sure that you look as ugly as I do now."

Yu Peiyu calmly retorted: "I think you hope that everyone in the world has the same ugly face like you."

Sang Erlang looked very angry and slapped him and said: "You think you're very handsome.....I.....I.....used to....."

He became very frantic and upset.

Granny Hu sighed: "Poor child, you must have suffered the Silkworm's feast. That's why you look like this."

Zhu Lei'Er could resist to ask: "What is this Silkworm's feast?"

Sang Erlang scoffed: "No need to ask, you will soon find out personally."

Granny Hu retorted: "I have no ties with this Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er. Furthermore I have no grudges with the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. Why tie me up?"

Sang Erlang ignored her and granny Hu deeply sighed: "Yu Peiyu, young master Yu. How could you rent this carriage with your intelligence?"

Yu Peiyu sighed too, at that moment he was too worried about Zhu Lei'Er and her condition. He was too negligent and didn't think clearly.

When Zhu Lei'Er saw Yu Peiyu's reaction, her eyes were watery and bit her lip. She said: "I know fourth uncle was too concerned about me. If he wasn't that worried about me, he wouldn't have fallen for their tricks. It is all my fault."

Yu Peiyu consoled her: "It's not your fault, I should have guessed that the Heavenly Silkworm Sect wouldn't let Silver Blossom go that easily....."

Silver Blossom screamed: "Sang Erlang! What is the idea of tying me up here! Release me now!"

Because she lost her internal strength, she was the weakest of the four. And she was also the last one to wake up.

Sang Erlang looked at her and smiled: "Second Miss, you're in no position anymore to order me around."

Silver Blossom said: "Sang Erlang, don't forget who saved you."

Sang Erlang nodded and said: "Yes, you saved me. But let us not forget that you told the hierarch that I tried to rape you. That is why I had to endure the Silkworm's feast."

He looked very sinister now and said coldly: "You have betrayed the hierarch now, and nobody will plead for you. Soon you will suffer the same fate as I did all those years

ago. But I will beg the hierarch to spare your life too. You too will learn how it feels to live your life as an ugly person!"

Silver Blossom looked petrified and stammered with difficulty: "Do...don't forget. The hierarch is my father. He....he won't punish me that severely."

Sang Erlang scoffed: "He won't, will he?"

Silver Blossom yelled: "Of course he won't. Now release me."

Sang Erlang said earnestly: "You stole the treasure of the Palace of Enchantment, mislead the hierarch. However the hierarch was secretly spying on you. And if you would have begged for forgiveness and mercy at the graveyard of the Family Li Village. He wouldn't punish you this severely. But....you aligned yourself with outsiders and forget about the sect. Your desire to betray us is evident."

Silver Blossom yelled: "You were at the cemetery too! So it wasn't my father."

Sang Erlang said: "Yes, it was me. If it was the hierarch you were dead now."

Silver Blossom angrily said: "You animal! I knew you weren't a real man, but now I'm sure of that."

Sang Erlang laughed sinisterly: "You haven't fallen into the hands of an animal. I waited outside the Family Li Village for you, and when you were captured by Yu Fanghe's henchmen I rescued you. With the purpose of letting you sample the Silkworm's feast."

He laughed even louder now: "But it was an extra surprise when Yu Peiyu came to us too. The little fool was so happy to see the carriage, he thought I was his saviour. But in fact I am your nemesis!"

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "Now I know what is going here. You were just lucky."

Chapter 24 : Escaping With Luck

Granny Hu stayed silent for awhile and said softly: "Sang Erlang is a madman, Yu Peiyu is a fool. Just my luck meeting these two in one day."

Sang Erlang yelled: "I have found it."

Everyone wondered what he has found, only Yu Peiyu could vaguely see him holding a pellet or something like that.

It was very hot inside the cave because of all those bonfires. Sang Erlang picked up a box and used his fan to tap on it, there was a strange sound coming from the box.

Sang Erlang laughed: "Be patient! You will soon be fed."

Silver Blossom looked at the box and she was horrified.

Zhu Lei'Er couldn't help to ask her: "Are those silkworms in that box?"

Silver Blossom nodded.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Do silkworms eat men?"

Silver Blossom shivered with fear.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I heard that silkworms don't like the cold, is that why there are so many bonfires here?"

Sang Erlang looked at the two girls and sinisterly laughed: "Still chit-chatting? When my little silkworms will crawl over your body, you will begging for a quick death."

Zhu Lei'Er said calmly: "No need to scare us, right fourth uncle?"

She turned around to look at Yu Peiyu, she saw him looking very pale and anxious.

Zhu Lei'Er thought: Fourth uncle is afraid of dying too? Maybe because I have never experienced the joys of life, that is why I'm not afraid to die.

Yu Peiyu turned to granny Hu and asked: "After three days not even you can cure Miss Zhu's poison, is that correct?"

Zhu Lei'Er's eyes became watery, she was touched and saddened by Yu Peiyu's words.

Zhu Lei'Er was daydreaming on Yu Peiyu's gentle words, she didn't pay attention to granny Hu's answer. She did not care about the antidote anymore.

After hearing Yu Peiyu's words she felt that she could die in peace. Besides her late mother and her third uncle, she now knew that there was another person who cared deeply for her.

This person treasured her life above his own.

After a long time, everyone could hear a strange sound coming from outside the cave.

Sang Erlang leapt off the altar in one go and sternly asked: "Who is there?"

Nobody answered. The noise came closer and closer, Sang Erlang waved his hand and told his six other martial arts brothers to hide.

He was planning a surprise attack for the unwanted visitor, Zhu Lei'Er saw that Sang Erlang's martial arts were much higher than his other martial arts brothers.

Sang Erlang stood there not moving, he looked rather impressive standing like that. It was also a display of his superior martial arts.

Granny Hu sighed softly: "No wonder this brat is so arrogant. I don't think that the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect is much better than him."

At this point everyone an old donkey came into the cave. The rider was a very old man, his face was as wrinkled as granny Hu. Many thought that granny Hu and this old man would make a perfect pair.

The rider seemed to have closed his eyes and the donkey kept moving forward.

Zhu Lei'Er whispered to granny Hu: "This old man has the audacity to come in here. Is he an expert? Do you recognize him?"

Granny Hu shook her head and said: "I've met many martial arts experts in my life, but I don't know this old man. And he doesn't look like an expert in my opinion."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed, the donkey and the rider were approaching Sang Erlang.

Everyone knew that Sang Erlang had to give the signal and all his martial arts brothers would attack and the old man would likely be killed instantly.

Yu Peiyu suddenly shouted: "This is a dangerous place, old sir. Leave at once!"

The old man opened his eyes and looked in the direction of Yu Peiyu.

Sang Erlang laughed evilly: "It is too late to go back now."

The old man said: "I must have taken a wrong turn somewhere. I will go now."

Sang Erlang laughed: "It is too late, die!"

He flickered with his hand and seven strange silvery projectiles shot towards the old man.

Yu Peiyu and others knew those must be those infamous lethal silkworms, Zhu Lei'Er was horrified and she could imagine that those silkworms would mutilate the old man beyond recognition.

However the old man lifted his arm and the seven silkworms flew into his sleeve and he was unharmed.

Zhu Lei'Er was extremely happy, she thought that this old man would be able to save them all.

Sang Erlang yelled: "Who are you!"

He leapt up and dived towards the old man, he used his fan as a weapon. He aimed for seven, eight different spots of the old man.

Every move was set for the kill, everyone thought it was impossible for this old man to defend himself.

Even Yu Peiyu thought he himself might not be able to counter this attack.

However Sang Erlang shot backwards and fell to the ground. The old man was holding the fan of Sang Erlang and turned to granny Hu: "Although the martial arts of Sang Erlang are quite alright, but compared to the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect.....He has still a long road ahead of him."

The old man was the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect, no wonder he could defeat Sang Erlang in less than one stance. Sang Erlang's martial arts were all taught by him.

Zhu Lei'Er's heart sank again, their saviour belonged to these people.

Sang Erlang knelt to the hierarch and respectfully said: "Please forgive this lowly disciple for not receiving you earlier."

The hierarch coldly said: "I have heard of your arrogant behaviour. But now I've experienced that from first hand."

Sang Erlang didn't dare to look up and said: "I didn't know the hierarch was coming and I didn't recognize your brilliant disguise. I thought it was an intruder."

The hierarch angrily said: "Even so, you can't just attack people with the silkworms. You have experienced the pains inflicted by those silkworms. Do you really wish others to share your fate too?"

Sang Erlang said: "I know my faults, hierarch."

The hierarch continued: "Everyone in Wulin knows about the lethality and viciousness of our sect. But we're also very

fair, we will hunt down our enemies to corners of the world. But we will help out our friends if they need our support. We have also very strict regulations about using certain methods against strangers. As the head disciple of our sect you should know better.”

Sang Erlang said: “Please punish me accordingly.”

The hierarch said: “I know you were punished too severely in the past, for that I’ve granted you more privileges than the others. I hope that you will change in the future but if you won’t (humph*). You will pay the ultimate price for your arrogance.”

Yu Peiyu was rather impressed by the grandeur of this hierarch, it is hard to believe that he was the old man with one arm who trapped him and Jin Yanzi in the Palace of Enchantment. His art of disguise is truly amazing even his own students didn’t recognize him.

Sang Erlang ripped open his clothes, revealing his mutilated body.

He removed his girdle and placed it on the floor and kowtowed three times.

There were seven silver blades on the girdle, he kowtowed another three more times.

Everyone was surprised of his actions, the hierarch frowned and asked: “What are you doing?”

Sang Erlang said: “After hearing the hierarch’s words I feel that I’m beyond redemption. I just want to die and thank you for your years of gratitude.”

Everybody was amazed by his words.

The hierarch said: “You know that once the ritual of the silver blades is started, it cannot be revoked.”

Sang Erlang said: “I know, hierarch.”

The hierarch said: “I’ve forgiven your crimes, why do you want to die?”

Sang Erlang said sadly: "I'm willing to die, I cannot repay the kindness the hierarch has shown me. I just hope that with my death the other martial arts brothers and sisters can learn from my past mistakes."

The hierarch looked somewhat pleased and said: "I will forgive you for your mistakes. It is good to see that you've learnt from your errors."

Zhu Lei'Er thought: This Sang Erlang really knows how to act, first he deliberately repents deeply and now he is just waiting to be pardoned.

However Sang Erlang sighed: "Although the hierarch has forgiven me, I can't forgive myself. I just want to confess my crimes before I die."

The hierarch said: "I know of your crimes, get up now."

Sang Erlang sighed sadly: "The hierarch is all-knowing, but I did manage to conceal a few secrets from you. If I can't confess my crimes before I die, I will have failed you as a pupil."

The hierarch looked startled, Zhu Lei'Er thought: What is he up to? Does he really want to die?

The hierarch said: "So be it, tell me of your crimes."

Sang Erlang said: "The hierarch has treated me like a son, and the three Misses have also regarded me as their brother. However I do not deserve your love and affection."

He looked at Silver Blossom and said: "Five years ago on a summer's night, second Miss was bathing in a pond. She was very young at that time and didn't suspect my ill intentions. When I saw her beautiful body, I couldn't control my earthy desires for her anymore. So.....so....I tried to rape her."

He was very honest about what he did, Zhu Lei'Er was bemused and thought: There is no need to say it that bluntly.

The hierarch was pleased to see him that honest and said: "And I've punished you for that incident, there is no need to bring this matter up again."

Sang Erlang continued: "But I keep thinking about that night everyday. I keep thinking of second Miss and my earthly desires are awoken then."

He picked up a blade and stabbed it in his leg.

The hierarch asked: "What else?"

Sang Erlang said: "Not only have I been deceiving you, but I have also abused my power as the head disciple of our sect. I have treated my other martial arts brothers too strictly. And I have caused the death of the eldest martial arts brother."

The hierarch said: "San Dalang was about to betray our sect and I. I would have dealt with him sooner or later."

Sang Erlang said: "But still I have been bullying around the other martial arts brothers....."

The hierarch said: "Being strict is no crime; furthermore you have a responsibility to be strict as the head disciple of our sect."

Originally it was the hierarch who was lecturing Sang Erlang on his arrogant behaviour. But now Sang Erlang was reproaching himself and the hierarch was making excuses for him.

Sang Erlang said: "But I have really been bad to them, hierarch you can ask second martial arts brother about it."

The hierarch turned to the skinny second martial arts brother and asked: "Did your eldest martial arts brother really cross the line?"

The second martial arts brother was stuttering.

Sang Erlang said: "Don't hold back anything, tell the hierarch what I did to all of you."

All of a sudden the second martial arts brother shouted: "Right, eldest martial arts brother doesn't consider us

human beings. He used whips or canes to struck us. Once I accidentally hit the dog of him and he made me bow and kowtow to his dog and ordered me to eat the s-h-i-t- of that filthy beast. And....and....another time.....”

The hierarch interrupted him: “Enough! I’ve heard enough!”

Sang Erlang said: “He is right! I.....I.....know that I’m beyond forgiving.”

He picked up another blade and stabbed it into his other leg.

The hierarch looked shocked and said: “No matter what you’ve done.....I admire your honesty. I will forgive you for your crimes. I just hope you won’t commit more atrocities again in the future.”

Sang Erlang was weeping: “Hierarch, you....you.....are too good to me. I will never be able to repay you in my life.”

He was sobbing, and picked up another blade and was about to stab it into his chest.

The hierarch quickly grabbed the wrist of Sang Erlang and yelled: “You can’t die! I won’t allow you to die!”

He wanted to grab the silver blade to prevent Sang Erlang to stab himself.

But suddenly a silvery object flew towards the face of the hierarch. He was completely taken by surprise.

His face was hit by that strange object.

He angrily wanted to strike down Sang Erlang, but he had already rolled away a few metres away from the hierarch.

The hierarch cursed: “You bastard!”

Sang Erlang laughed arrogantly: “Sang Mukong.....Sang Mukong! Finally, you know how powerful and good I really am.”

Silver Blossom shrieked and granny Hu was surprised too.

Sang Erlang laughed sinisterly: “You must know what I’ve concealed in the handle of my blade. If you’re wise you

would sit down and use your internal power to surpress the poison.”

The hierarch, San Mukong yelled:
“You.....you.....ungrateful.....”

He fell down and tried to get up but a few a few spasms he fell down and remained emotionless.

Sang Erlang laughed loudly and the other martial arts brothers were shocked beyond words.

Sang Erlang continued to laugh arrogantly: “Sang Mukong, Sang Mukong! I knew it was you all along, I just played along.”

Zhu Lei’Er couldn’t help but to say: “Now I really know why you are feared that much. But why the charades.”

Sang Erlang said: “When I first attacked the old goat, I immediately saw that he didn’t teach me everything he knew. I’m no match for the old goat, so I had to find a different way to defeat him.”

Sang Erlang was feeling very happy and was very eager to tell everyone how he could defeat his enemy.

Sang Erlang continued: “I’ve known the old fool for many years. I know everything there is to know about his personality. He loves to be called all-knowing, he thinks he knows everything. Furthermore he loves people to confess his crimes to him, he hates people lying to him. So I know exactly how to deal with him!”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Why did you attack him? Did you want to avenge yourself?”

Sang Erlang said: “Exactly, but there is another reason.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Well, what is that reason of yours? Do you want to become the hierarch yourself?”

Sang Erlang said: “You have too many questions.”

Zhu Lei’Er laughed: “I don’t think you have a lot support, hierarch Sang.”

Sang Erlang looked at his other martial arts brothers and said coldly: "Well, do you have anything to say?"

All of them knelt down and said: "I have nothing to say."

Sang Erlang laughed: "Very good! I will not forget your support. For many years we are hated and feared for being a heretic sect. But soon everyone in Wulin will fear and respect our sect. We will become equal to schools like Shaolin, Wudang and E Mei. Nobody will dare to look down upon us ever again."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "You must be dreaming."

Sang Erlang said: "In about one hour I will prove it to you."

Zhu Lei'Er remained quiet and thought: In one hour he can turn a heretic sect into an orthodox school?

The second martial arts brother begged: "I've always wanted to see the eldest brother become the hierarch."

Sang Erlang said casually: "Really."

The second brother said: "I would not dream of lying to you."

Sang Erlang said: "I am a cold and mean man, I did not treat you as human beings. Why would you support me? Is there something wrong with you?"

The second brother was trembling heavily.

Sang Erlang said: "There really is something wrong with you."

The second brother got up and wanted to run out of the cave, Sang Erlang anticipated that and blocked his way.

He said coldly: "Going somewhere?"

The second brother begged: "I was just spouting nonsense earlier. Please forgive, hierarch Sang....."

He suddenly shot out 10 metallic objects towards Sang Erlang. The two of them stood very close to each other and the second brother was confident he wouldn't miss.

But the discrepancy between his martial arts and Sang Erlang's is as big as Sang Mukong and Sang Erlang.

Sang Erlang used his fan to fan back the metallic objects and hit the second brother on the chest.

He yelled with pain and screamed: "Please kill me! Please just kill me!"

The poison on those metallic objects were very lethal, but the poison would not kill instantly. It made sure that the victim had suffered tremendously before dying.

Sang Erlang ignored him and said loudly: "This will serve as an example of traitors to our sect."

The second brother was rolling and yelling in pain, everyone felt sorry for him but couldn't help him.

Sang Erlang turned his attention to Silver Blossom.

Sang Erlang said calmly: "You must still remember what happened five years ago, right."

Silver Blossom nodded.

Sang Erlang said: "You knew I was there because I was training. You deliberately took your clothes off and seduced me. When I couldn't control my desires anymore and stormed out. You pretended to be innocent and told the old goat I tried to rape you. Why did you do that?"

He became very emotional and upset and shouted: "I have been thinking about why you did that all these years. However I cannot come up with an answer. But now I know you were trying to get me insane. You want people to get insane over you."

Silver Blossom said: "I.....I.....didn't mean that to happen."

Sang Erlang asked: "What were your intentions?"

Silver Blossom stuttered: "I...I...was in love with you. That....that day I just wanted you to hug me.....But you stormed to me with such fierceness and scared me. Also....also I was very young so I told my father."

Her voice sounded very seductive and sweet, she (un)intentionally panted heavily making her bosom moving up and down.

Sang Erlang's eyes were glowing and said: "Aren't you afraid now?"

She bit her lip softly and said: "Now.....now...I am....."

Silver Blossom gave him a very meaningful look.

Sang Erlang laughed loudly, he went over to her and ripped her clothes open. Revealing her beautiful figure and white and smooth skin. All the other martial arts brothers looked at her too and their eyes were glowing with lust too.

Sang Erlang laughed: "All these years I wanted to see you naked again. I wanted to see whether you've changed."

Silver Blossom said softly: "Have I changed?"

Sang Erlang said softly: "No.....you haven't changed."

He was starting to tremble and to sweat.

Zhu Lei'Er was very scared when she saw the crazed look on Sang Erlang's mutilated face.

Silver Blossom remained calm that is because she has closed her eyes for some time now.

She said romantically: "If you've been waiting for me all this time, why won't you....."

Sang Erlang shouted: "No, you haven't changed. But I have."

He chucked away his fan and threw himself on Silver Blossom. He started to kiss, scratch, bite, pinch, hit, slap her. He was smelling her, he acted like a mad dog.

Sang Erlang panted heavily: "After a man has to endure the silkworm's feast, he changes. Do you know in what he changes? I will tell you, he won't be a man anymore. Because of you I'm not a man anymore and I won't let you be a woman any longer."

Silver Blossom was scared beyond her wits and stammered: "You....you.....cannot.....you....impo....."

Sang Erlang yelled: "You're right! I can't be with women anymore thanks to you!"

Even granny Hu diverted her eyes to what Sang Erlang was doing to Silver Blossom. He was too cruel.

Not only was Sang Erlang not a man anymore, he had also lost his humanity. The things he did to her couldn't be described with words.

Silver Blossom was weeping and begging: "Please don't! Please stop! Just kill me! Please just kill me!"

Initially she begged for him to spare her life, but then she couldn't live with the pain she now endured and wanted to die.

But Sang Erlang didn't stop and laughed evilly: "I won't let you die that easily."

The beautiful body of Silver Blossom was covered with her own blood, the pain was too much for her and she fainted.

Sang Erlang was also covered in blood and his heavy panting also stopped.

The evil glow in his eyes was gone, his suppressed emotions were finally released. He was a broken man now.

The entire cave was silenced.

After a very long time, they could hear a horse coming this way. This time Sang Erlang looked very happy and did not wait forward to shout who it was.

It seems he was waiting for the rider to come.

Zhu Lei'Er thought: Could that be his partner in crime? He must have planned this all along and that's why he dared to betray and ambush his own teacher. But who could this person be?

Zhu Lei'Er became very anxious and hoped to device a plan soon or else all of them will die very quickly now.

But what can they do against a madman?

A horse entered the cave, it was a splendid stallion. The rider was a muscular man wearing an expensive long robe.

Zhu Lei'Er softly asked granny Hu again: "Do you know that fellow?"

Granny Hu said softly: "No, I don't."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "It seems that you don't know anyone at all, do you? And especially experts."

Granny Hu said: "If this rider is an expert I will poke out my eyes right away."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You are already missing a nose, now you want to become blind as well. Won't you become even more uglier."

Zhu Lei'Er knew that this muscular man wasn't an expert either. Although his riding skills were passable, but he lacked the grandeur of a martial artist.

And when he dismounted one could see that he had hardly learnt martial arts. But Sang Erlang looked very happy.

Was he waiting for this man? Was he the key for transforming this heretic sect into an orthodox school.

This was the most anxious moment of Yu Peiyu and others, their survival depended from this man.

The man walked over to Sang Erlang and said: "I have message for master Sang Erlang."

Sang Erlang said: "I'm Sang Erlang, I've been waiting for you."

The man said: "Master Sang, I have a"

Sang Erlang drew a dagger with incredible speed and stabbed it through the throat of the messenger.

The man fell down and looked at Sang Erlang with disbelief and anger. He will never know why he was killed, Zhu Lei'Er also almost shrieked with surprise.

Why would he kill the messenger, and didn't he want to know what the message was. Even a cunning woman like granny Hu was puzzled about his intentions.

Perhaps Sang Erlang knew that this man was carrying an important document, so he killed him first.

Sang Erlang kicked the body of the man far away and he pulled the horse closer and stroke the horse.

He laughed: "Do you think I was waiting for the rider? I was waiting for the horse."

He was waiting for a horse! Is he even more insane than they thought. Was he thinking that the horse would talk to him?

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "It seems only a horse can communicate with a mad dog."

Before Zhu Lei'Er could say anything else, Sang Erlang smashed the head of the horse with his iron palms. The horse died instantly, now nobody understood what he was up to.

Zhu Lei'Er gave up on following the logic of a madman. Yu Peiyu sighed to her: "I failed you. I failed to take good care of you....."

Zhu Lei'Er said sadly: "It is not your fault, fourth uncle. It is my fault, fourth uncle."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and didn't know what he could say.

Granny Hu scoffed: "You're about to die anyway. Why worry about the lives of others."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "People like you will never understand good men like fourth uncle. You only care about yourself. But fourth uncle, he cares for everyone else....."

Granny Hu scoffed: "I don't see him caring for me."

Zhu Lei'Er ignored her and was feeling touched and sweet. She knew for sure that there was one person who cares so much for her. Even more than his own life, she wasn't afraid to die now.

Yu Peiyu didn't understand what went through the heads of young girls even if he understood he wouldn't hurt her feelings.

Sang Erlang used a sabre to hack open the horse and removed the intestines of the horse.

Zhu Lei'Er almost threw up when she saw this revolting scene. She used to believe that the most vile creatures in this world would be the snake and the wolf. However she knew that those two animals couldn't be compared to this madman.

Yu Peiyu said gently: "If you're afraid, just close your eyes."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I am not afraid, I'm just sad."

She sighed softly: "I could have escaped but I missed out on that opportunity."

Granny Hu looked at her and said: "What!"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "When you were knocked out by that incense I managed to conceal some of that incense in my sleeve."

Granny Hu looked very happy and said softly: "Do you still have it? Throw it into the bonfire now, they aren't watching us now."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I've thought about that too, when you and fourth uncle were unconscious I just pretended."

She sighed deeply: "It is too late now."

Granny Hu asked: "Why?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "When the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect was talking to Sang Erlang I tried to throw the incense into the bonfire next to us. But....."

Granny Hu almost shouted: “You missed!?!”

Zhu Lei’Er sighed: “I was too anxious and nervous at the time. So I used too much force.”

Granny Hu asked: “Where is it now?”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Do you see that strange thing in front of the dead hierarch? That is it.”

They could see that the incense in front of the dead Sang Mukong. It was just a few centimetres away from the fire.

Granny Hu cursed: “You idiot, fool! Why didn’t you give it to someone else? You should chop off your useless hands.”

Zhu Lei’Er received the scolding.

Yu Peiyu said: “If you would given it to me, I would have missed too.”

Zhu Lei’Er said softly: “Granny Hu is right. I wanted to prove myself in front of you. I wanted you to see me being capable.....”

Granny Hu interrupted: “You’re an idiot, an useless idiot! Not only have you doomed me, you and you’ve also doomed Yu Peiyu. You wanted Yu Peiyu to praise you and love you. He only treats you like a niece, furthermore he has plenty of beautiful lovers. He won’t fall for a little b-i-t-c-h- like you.....”

Zhu Lei’Er trembled and said: “You old crone,.....”

Suddenly one of the martial arts brothers of Sang Erlang yelled: “My hand.....my hand.....”

His hand was black and swollen up, Sang Erlang didn’t even look up. He was still looking for something in the intestines of the horse.

Yu Peiyu sighed: “Is this your doing again?”

Zhu Lei’Er bit her lip and pouted: “He shouldn’t have touched me.”

Granny Hu looked happy again and asked: "So when he touched you, his hand became like this?"

Zhu Lei'Er nodded.

Granny Hu said happily: "Good, sweet Miss. If you would let Sang Erlang touch you too. Won't we be rescued?"

Zhu Lei'Er didn't answer and looked very serious now.

Yu Peiyu said: "Life and death are pre-ordained. I won't allow him to touch her."

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and was again touched by Yu Peiyu's words.

Granny Hu smiled: "But if he would touch her anyway."

Yu Peiyu said: "If he wants to do that, I will warn him of the poison on Miss Zhu."

Granny Hu was stunned and said: "You would rather die!"

Yu Peiyu said casually: "I will not survive by using low-down tricks."

Granny Hu stayed silent for awhile and said softly: "Sang Erlang is a madman, Yu Peiyu is a fool. Just my luck meeting these two in one day."

Sang Erlang yelled: "I have found it."

Everyone wondered what he has found, only Yu Peiyu could vaguely see him holding a pellet or something like that.

The poisoned disciple knelt in front of Sang Erlang and begged: "Please.....save me.....my hand....."

Sang Erlang was surprised and asked: "Are you poisoned?"

The disciple kowtowed: "Eldest.....hierarch I've always respected you. I hope you can....."

Sang Erlang angrily said: "You think I was the one who poisoned you."

The disciple begged: "Please forgive me.....please forgive me...."

Sang Erlang laughed sinisterly: "You don't even know who poisoned you or how you were poisoned. Useless fool!"

The disciple said: "Hierarch....."

Sang Erlang used the same sabre he used to hack open the horse to stab the disciple in the stomach. The blood splattered on Sang Erlang's body.

He didn't even bother to wipe his face, he laughed: "Do you know why I am leaving you life for another hour?"

He was talking to Zhu Lei'Er.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Because of that thing you've found in the stomach of the horse."

Sang Erlang held out the pellet and said: "Indeed."

It was a wax pellet, and Sang Erlang squished it and there was a small letter in it.

He laughed loudly: "Do you now understand?"

Zhu Lei'Er said casually: "So much fuss over a letter."

But she was also very much impressed about the writer of this letter. He went through all that trouble to send a letter to Sang Erlang, sacrificing a henchman and a horse.

But he made sure that the contents of that letter wouldn't leak out.

Sang Erlang read the letter a few times and looked very happy.

Granny Hu had her eyes fixed on the incense and was hoping that the wind would blow that incense into the fire. But that was just wishful thinking.

Zhu Lei'Er wanted to know what was in the letter too, Sang Erlang turned to her and asked: "Do you want to know what is in the letter?"

Zhu Lei'Er was happy and surprised but said casually: "A mere glare won't hurt."

Sang Erlang laughed: "I don't mind, because I know that dead people can keep secrets best."

He held the letter in front of Zhu Lei'Er, the letter said:
Dear Hierarch Sang,

When you have received this letter, I take it you have successfully become the new hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. My congratulations.

With your talents and abilities you will not only be able to bring glory to your sect but also to the entire Wulin.

The issues we have discussed are not a problem, I will personally see to it that the agreed will be carried out.

I shall also proclaim a new gathering at Lake Huang and nominate you to be the chancellor of Wulin.

I sincerely hope you will meet up with me within the next ten days. I will await your arrival with fine wine and food.

Yours sincerely,

(there was a strange seal at the bottom of the letter).

Sang Erlang laughed: "You see? From now on we will not only be equals of Shaolin and Wudang. We will even be their superiors."

When Yu Peiyu saw the seal, he trembled and asked: "Who wrote this letter?"

Sang Erlang said: "Only chancellor Yu Fanghe is fit and has the right to write such a letter."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "No wonder you went insane over this letter. Yu Fanghe has promised to help you in becoming the chancellor of Wulin."

Sang Erlang laughed happily: "Only he has such power."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You will only trust his words and promise."

Sang Erlang said: "Correct."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "He addressed you as [hierarch]. So in other words he knew about your plan to kill Sang Mukong. If you failed you would be killed by Sang Mukong and he wouldn't know about the letter. So his secret won't be exposed."

Sang Erlang smiled: "That is the clever part of chancellor Yu."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "So he must contacted you before he went to Family Li Village. That's why you were there and was able to take Silver Blossom here."

Sang Erlang laughed: "Exactly."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But do you believe the words of Yu Fanghe? Will he really help you?"

Sang Erlang smiled: "That is not your concern anymore. Now, how do you want to die? Eaten by silkworms or cut up in small pieces with our golden blades."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "I like to be bitten to death by a mad dog."

Sang Erlang laughed: "That is a good choice, unfortunately we don't have a mad dog here."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Who says there isn't? I am looking at one right now."

Sang Erlang was furious and laughed arrogantly: "Good! I will use our sect's three great torture methods on you first. I want you to suffer before you die!"

He turned around and continued to laugh.

Zhu Lei'Er got goosebumps all over and knew there was no escape now. She might as well curse till her death.

Granny Hu at this point whispered: "Don't say a word."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at the same direction as Granny Hu and saw that the incense was gone.

It rolled into the fire, she was extremely happy and wanted to ask how.

Granny Hu quickly whispered: "Sang Mukong isn't dead yet, look he still panting weakly."

Zhu Lei'Er saw that it was Sang Mukong who unintentionally softly blew the incense into the fire with his weak breathing.

Zhu Lei'Er was very excited, she closed her eyes and pretended to await her fate.

Sang Erlang laughed: "Do you want to see how my precious silkworms look like? There are the most beautiful creatures in the world. But when they crawl over your body you will have a good look."

Zhu Lei'Er closed her mouth tightly.

Sang Erlang laughed: "Closing your eyes won't help! When the silkworms are crawling over you, you will look at them."

Zhu Lei'Er knew that she was about to be saved but the mere thought of those disgusting worms crawling over her was really revolting.

Sang Erlang was very happy to see her scared like this.

Yu Peiyu scoffed: "I have seen many madmen in my life, but I've never seen a revolting madman like you before."

Sang Erlang yelled: "What!"

Yu Peiyu continued: "There are two kinds of mad people, you have madmen and madwomen. But you're neither one of them. You're just an useless eunuch. I'm wrong even eunuchs are better than you."

Sang Erlang was trembling again with anger, the words of Yu Peiyu struck a sensitive nerve.

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Because you can't make women happy anymore, you hate them. You don't even have it in you to spare young girls. Why won't you try our methods on me?"

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised that a nice young man like Yu Peiyu would say such words. But in a moment she understood, he was afraid that the incense hadn't taken effect yet. And Sang Erlang would have started to torture her.

So he made Sang Erlang angry and hoped he would direct his anger at himself and spare Zhu Lei'Er.

Zhu Lei'Er was happy, sad, touched by Yu Peiyu's actions. Her heart now fully belonged to him. She started to cry.

Sang Erlang gritted his teeth and said: "Alright! I will begin with you, I will take ten days to deal with you."

Granny Hu shouted: "Just a minute!"

Sang Erlang angrily shouted: "Wait for what!"

Granny Hu said: "You're going to torture him for the next ten days anyway. Give me a few moments to tell an interesting story."

She didn't want to save Yu Peiyu, but if she didn't start to speak, Zhu Lei'Er would. And knowing that young girl she might say the wrong thing again. So granny Hu quickly intervened.

Sang Erlang laughed evilly: "I want to hear him cry in pain and will listen to your interesting story at the same time."

Granny Hu said: "But with his cries you won't be able to listen carefully to my story. My story concerns the gathering at Lake Huang."

Granny Hu had the attention of Sang Erlang, the only thing that could draw his attention was the gathering.

Sang Erlang put the box with silkworms aside and Yu Peiyu was relieved. Although he has experienced numerous times of near deaths but being eaten by those revolting worms is still not a very pleasant way to go.

At this point he felt woozy and tired, his hands began to shake. He could hardly keep his eyes open. Before he knew it he passed out.

When he opened his eyes he saw the beautiful Zhu Lei'Er looking at him very happily.

She had in her hands a fan, she had woken him up again by using the fan of Sang Erlang.

He asked her: "Are you alright?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Shouldn't I be asking that question?"

She helped him up and said: "I never thought the incense would take effect this quickly, Sang Erlang sneezed and fell down."

Yu Peiyu said: "Well the such a big fire the smoke emitted quicker. And the intoxicating part of the incense was at the thicker part of the incense."

Suddenly he noticed her hand was wrapped up and asked: "What happened to your hand? How did you get injured?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "It doesn't matter, the ropes were very tight. So I had to burn myself loose."

She paused and bit her lip and asked: "Are you really fine?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I'm still feeling a bit weak."

Zhu Lei'Er happily said: "That's quite natural. You will feel fine in a day or two."

She looked at granny Hu and Silver Blossom and sighed: "Although this girl is very annoying, but she is also very sad. We should take her with us."

Yu Peiyu nodded and said: "You're right."

He grabbed granny Hu by her shoulders and asked sternly: "Where is your antidote? Can we still make it?"

Granny Hu smiled: "You, little brat. Do you still remember the antidote?"

Yu Peiyu angrily said: "How can I forget such a thing? If you don't give me the antidote to cure Lei'Er, I will....."

Granny Hu said calmly: "If we're too late, there is no point in killing me. But if we hurry I can promise you she will be alright."

Yu Peiyu felt relieved when he heard that and said: "Let us go now!"

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What about the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect?"

Yu Peiyu said earnestly: "This hierarch is not too bad and he does have the grandeur of a true leader. We should really save him, but we don't know how to cure his wounds."

Granny Hu said: "Just put him out of his misery, kill him."

Yu Peiyu said: "It is wrong not to help out, and killing defenseless people is totally out of the question."

Granny Hu said: "If you don't kill him now, he will kill you sooner or later."

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "I will cross that bridge when I get there."

Granny Hu scoffed: "You think you're being heroic? That is plain stupidity what you're doing."

Yu Peiyu said: "If that's stupidity, it is fine with me. Rather a stupid person than a honourless monster."

Granny Hu said softly: "Men like those are becoming very very rare. You know why? That is because men like you won't live very long."

Zhu Lei'Er picked up a sabre and walked over to Sang Erlang.

Yu Peiyu asked: "What are you doing?"

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and said: "I will listen to everything you say, fourth uncle. But I cannot allow this monster to stay alive, otherwise I won't be able to live with myself if he would harm others again."

Suddenly a voice said: "Miss Zhu, you don't have to worry about him. I will deal with him personally."

That voice was coming from next to them, but with the exception of the three of them there was nobody else.

The rest have fainted already.

Zhu Lei'Er held Yu Peiyu's hand tightly and asked: "Who are you? And where are you?"

The voice laughed: "I'm just in front of you, Miss. Can't you see me?"

During this laughter a man got up, it was the Sang Mukong. He isn't heavily injured at all. In fact he was not injured at all.

Chapter 25 : The Vicious Teacher And The Evil Disciple

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him and said: "Granny Hu compares you to Tian Chixing, are you his brother? He is fat and pale, you're dark and skinny."

Hai Dongqing looked annoyed, but didn't answer.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "You're a wolf, are your friends celestial pigs?"

Hai Dongqing frowned but didn't say a word.

The smoke of the fires made the cave very eerie, it resembled the netherworld.

The face of Sang Mukong was mutilated and one couldn't distinguish his face anymore. He looked monstrous.

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Oh, it is you."

Although she was laughing, her hands were very cold.

She was getting ready to attack Sang Mukong, Yu Peiyu didn't try to stop her. Their survival depended on whether her attack was successful.

Sang Mukong said coldly: "Miss is a very clever and bold young girl, however even after another ten years you're not my match. Perhaps with the help of young master Yu and granny Hu, the three of you could meet a draw with me. Unfortunately granny Hu and young master Yu are still weakened by the incense."

Zhu Lei'Er knew he was telling the truth.

Sang Mukong laughed: "Furthermore I saved your lives, you should be thanking me."

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned: "You saved us?"

Sang Mukong said: "I was the one who used my internal strength to blew the incense into the fire. Furthermore I used

my energy make the fire burn faster.”

Zhu Lei’Er said loudly: “Even so! If I didn’t throw that incense in front of you, you couldn’t have blown it in the fire.”

Sang Mukong laughed loudly: “Miss, you’re still a young girl.”

Zhu Lei’Er looked annoyed and said: “Don’t

Sang Mukong interrupted her: “This traitor had concealed a lethal poison in the handle of his dagger. Just a drop can melt your body away in about an hour.”

Zhu Lei’Er retorted: “I saw that watery substance hit you in the face.”

Sang Mukong said: “That traitor thought I was doomed for, but he forgot one important thing.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked quickly: “What is that?”

Sang Mukong ripped off his face, Yu Peiyu saw his true appearances.

He looked very handsome even for his old age, he must have been a very handsome man in his younger years.

Yu Peiyu wondered why he always had to disguise himself strangely, the old man with one arm the old wrinkled fellow.

Zhu Lei’Er was very surprised and said: “You were wearing a death mask?”

Sang Mukong smiled: “This mask is one of my best inventions, cannot be destroyed by water and fire. The poison, he used is lethal but he can penetrate through the mask.”

Zhu Lei’Er smiled sweetly: “You look very handsome, why wear a mask?”

Sang Mukong said: “I won’t allow people to see my true face, if someone will see my true appearances they will die!”

Everyone was startled when they heard this, Zhu Lei'Er stuttered: "You....you....."

Sang Mukong laughed: "Don't be afraid, this isn't my true appearance either."

After everyone was stunned by his words, Sang Mukong continued: "At least I know that this traitor in cahoots with Yu Fanghe. It is hard to believe that the benevolent Yu Fanghe is nothing but a powersick hypocrite."

Yu Peiyu said angrily: "You....."

But then he remembered Sang Mukong was talking about the imposter. Yu Peiyu felt very sad that his late father's reputation was being tarnished by that evil fake Yu Fanghe.

Sang Mukong looked pensive and did not notice Yu Peiyu's angry tone.

Zhu Lei'Er was still very much surprised and wanted to ask how he really looked like. But she quickly stopped herself.

Instead she asked: "What are you planning to do with us?"

Sang Mukong said slowly: "To be honest I'm not a benevolent man and you know that. You know too many of my secrets, I cannot let you live."

He paused for a minute and continued: "However you did not try to take my life earlier, and neither will I take advantage of this situation either. If we should meet again in the future we will neither be friends nor enemies."

Zhu Lei'Er was very anxious when she heard the first part, and thought they were done for. However she was relieved to hear that he would spare them.

Sang Mukong looked at Yu Peiyu the entire time when he spoke. Granny Hu was very happy and said: "Hierarch Sang is a true hero."

Sang Mukong looked at her coldly and sternly said: "Shut up! If you weren't travelling with Yu Peiyu I would love to kill you right now! Or at least chop off your two hands!"

Granny Hu immediately kept quiet.

She saw that Yu Peiyu wanted to say something, she was afraid his words might offend Sang Mukong. She quickly said to Yu Peiyu: "We should go now, if we're delayed any longer. I can't vow for her recovery."

Yu Peiyu shook his head, and looked at Silver Blossom one more time and hoped she will sincerely change her ways after this incident and sighed deeply.

Sang Mukong saw Yu Peiyu and said seriously: "I will take care of her, she is still my daughter. No matter what she has done."

Yu Peiyu nodded at him as a sign of thanks.

Yu Peiyu saw that outside the cave their carriage and horses were still there.

Although he has never ridden a carriage before, he could manage and he quickly followed the directions closely of granny Hu.

His heart was filled with worries and questions, Zhu Lei'Er saw that there was a small window and she could talk and speak with Yu Peiyu.

She asked gently: "Fourth uncle, are you alright? What are you thinking about?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "The hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect is a very mysterious man, nobody can tell whether he is good or evil. But one thing is for sure he will surely seek out Yu Fa....that Yu fellow."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That Yu Fanghe is a very cautious man, I don't think that Sang Mukong can openly accuse him of anything. There was no signature at the bottom of that letter. Even if there was a signature Yu Fanghe could find a scapegoat again."

Yu Peiyu said: "Anyway Yu Fanghe has made a formidable enemy by aggravating Sang Mukong."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Well Sang Erlang can't rendezvous with Yu Fanghe, I think Sang Mukong will go in his place to create trouble for Yu Fanghe."

Yu Peiyu nodded and said: "Very true."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "Fourth uncle.....you should have asked Sang Mukong some more questions. You don't have to worry about me, an extra few hours won't hurt me."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I really don't have any questions."

Zhu Lei'Er blinked her eyes and said: "Fourth uncle, don't you want to know where Sang Erlang is going to meet Yu Fanghe."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "No, I'm not interested."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why not?"

Yu Peiyu didn't answer her.

After awhile Zhu Lei'Er said: "I know why, fourth uncle is afraid when you know the location, you will rush over there at once. But you cannot leave me alone. Because of me you're dropping everything."

Yu Peiyu said: "Could you do something for me please?"

Zhu Lei'Er looked happy and said: "Anything you want."

Yu Peiyu said: "Sit back and take a nap. Don't worry too much."

Granny Hu kept giving Yu Peiyu directions, she wouldn't tell him where she lived. She was afraid he would leave her behind and go to her house straight away. This old woman was really paranoid.

It was evening now, Yu Peiyu was feeling quite tired now. But he didn't allow himself to rest and continued. He couldn't waste anymore time now.

Because the next morning it would be the third day, they had little time over. They stopped in a small town, Zhu Lei'Er bought some oranges. She peeled them carefully for Yu

Peiyu. She looked very worried, but it wasn't about her condition it was about something else.

She was carrying around with a secret, and it looked like she wanted to tell Yu Peiyu her secret a few times. But she stopped at the very last minute.

Yu Peiyu was wondering what her secret was, he didn't know what went through the little head of this clever and lovely young girl.

The villagers in this town all looked up when they saw this luxurious carriage riding by.

When they passed an expensive inn, granny Hu called out: "Stop the carriage!"

The aroma of the delicious food was very tempting and made the company of three very hungry.

Yu Peiyu asked quickly: "What is it?"

Granny Hu said: "For the last two days I've only been eating cold buns and fruit, if I don't have a warm meal I will die of hunger."

Yu Peiyu was startled and asked: "You want to eat here?"

Granny Hu said: "I can smell the roasted mutton here already. This inn is called Delicious Cuisine and I think they are quite good at preparing northern dishes."

Yu Peiyu couldn't believe his ears, he was travelling as fast as he could hoping to be on time. Now this old hag wants to eat and rest in this inn. Someone else would have cursed the old woman or even hit her, but Yu Peiyu knew that would be useless and said casually: "Very well."

Zhu Lei'Er was very surprised and called out: "You agree with her wishes?"

Yu Peiyu nodded.

Granny Hu smiled: "This youngster is smarter than you, he knows that there is no point in arguing with me. And in the end he has to comply with me anyway."

The Delicious Cuisine Inn does know how to prepare a good Peking Duck. It looked absolutely magnificent and it tasted even better.

Zhu Lei'Er was very surprised to see granny Hu wrap only a piece of roasted skin of the duck in a thin pancake and dip it into a sweet-and sour sauce. And she was even more surprised to see her ignored the meat.

She asked: "Why won't you eat the meat?"

Granny Hu laughed loudly: "You, silly girl! The roasted skin is the best part of the Peking duck, only a fool would eat the meat."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Really?"

Granny Hu said: "Of course, haven't you eaten Peking duck before?"

Zhu Lei'Er remained quiet and after awhile she said calmly: "So what if I haven't eaten it before. You haven't eaten my congee before either."

Granny Hu laughed loudly, but Yu Peiyu felt sad for Zhu Lei'Er. She hasn't even eaten Peking duck before, a very ordinary dish. There are so many joyous things in life she hasn't experienced before, but she had had her fair share of bitterness in life.

Yu Peiyu was feeling sad, so he didn't notice that a man walking in. And when this man saw them, he quickly hid behind a screen and spied on them. After a look or two he quickly left the inn and released a smoke signal into the sky.

Later that evening, the company of three continued their journey. And they had exchanged those two good stallions for two ordinary fine horses. The stallions were too tired after two days. Although these two horses aren't that fast but at least they were strong and energetic.

There was nobody on the road anymore, granny Hu smiled: "Don't worry! There is plenty of time."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Are we there yet?"

Granny Hu said: "Not far from here."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who is still left in your family?"

Granny Hu said: "Not too many and not too little."

Zhu Lei'Er gave up asking this old witch anything anymore, she won't reveal a thing anyway.

All of a sudden they saw a flare in the sky, and a soft noise.

Granny Hu was startled and asked: "What is that?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Probably nothing." But he knew better than that and knew that it was a signal of some sort.

But who could it be, were they after them? Could it be that Yu Fanghe was on their trail again.

Yu Peiyu was very anxious and worried and now they saw road-block up ahead. Eight men wearing black robes blocked the road looking fierce. Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and whipped the horses to dash through, he ignored the cries of those men.

Yu Peiyu yelled: "Out of the way!"

But those men didn't move, Yu Peiyu was no alternative but to dash through them.

However from both sides long spears stuck out and stuck through the wheels of the carriage.

The wheels were broken now but the horses continued to drag the carriage ahead, the carriage made an awful shrieking noise over the ground.

Yu Peiyu continued to whip the horses but it was no use they couldn't move anymore.

One of those men yelled: "Give up now!"

Two men walked forward and used their fists to hit the horses on their heads, the horses fell down and were dead. Those two men were awfully strong.

Yu Peiyu was surprised by their strengths and granny Hu and Zhu Lei'Er were still too shocked as to what happened just a minute ago.

Granny Hu said softly to herself: "This Yu Peiyu is only trouble, why do so many people want to look for him."

Zhu Lei'Er jumped out of the carriage and ignored those men and asked: "Fourth uncle, do you recognize these men?"

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "No, I don't."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Are they his henchmen?"

[His] of course refers to the fake Yu Fanghe, but Yu Peiyu said: "They don't look like his men."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Are they robbers?" Now she turned around and looked at these men, she saw the leader was a young and skinny man. He looked quite handsome but had a very proud expression.

But he looked somewhat surprised to see such a young and gorgeous girl coming out of the carriage.

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Being a robber at your young age? You should be ashamed of yourself."

The young man didn't answer and turned around to his men: "Are you sure? Didn't you make a mistake?"

One of those eight men said: "I am very sure it is her."

The young man stared at Zhu Lei'Er and asked earnestly: "Is your family name Hu?"

Zhu Lei'Er said in an annoyed tone: "Your family name is Hu! What kind of ridiculous nonsense is this!"

The young man turned to Yu Peiyu and said: "You're her senior, talk for crying out loud!"

Yu Peiyu smiled casually: "You block our way middle in the night, you destroy our carriage and killed our horses. What do you expect me to say?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Don't think because you're a bit strong you can order my fourth uncle around. If my uncle is angered he will slap you silly for being rude."

The young man laughed arrogantly: "Young Miss, you're the first person who has dared to be this insolent around me."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "So in others you must be a famous person in Wulin."

The young man said: "You can ask old woman Hu, who I am."

Yu Peiyu said: "You're here for granny Hu."

The young man stopped laughing and said: "What is your relationship with her? Is she your elder or teacher?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I don't have any connections with granny Hu, and if you should have any unresolved affairs with her I shouldn't interfere. But now...."

The young man said sternly: "Now you want to interfere."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What has she done to all of you?"

The young man laughed: "What she has done?!? Alright I will tell you."

He turned to one of those men and said: "Second brother Wang, tell him what business you have with granny Hu."

That second brother Wang shouted: "The old b-i-t-c-h- killed my entire family of nineteen people. My....my wife knelt to her and begged to spare my seventy year old mother. But....but....she....."

The man started to cry loudly.

The young man said: "Brother Zhao, tell him what the old woman did to you."

Brother Zhao said: "My parents are dead, so the old hag couldn't torture them. But I did have a wife and five children. Because my late teacher once offended her, she killed my wife and five children. My youngest son wasn't even one years old."

The young man said: "Brother Sun, tell him."

This man had only one arm and used his arm to pull up his robe, you could see his scorched flesh.

He didn't speak, but the young man said: "Brother Sun once unintentionally offended the daughter of granny Hu. So she tied him up and used fire to roast him for six whole hours."

Yu Peiyu didn't want to hear these horrible tales anymore and said: "I understand."

The young man said: "Six of our friends have died in order to find out where she lives, and we have waited here for an entire year just to await her arrival. Do you think your presence will prevent them for extracting revenge."

Yu Peiyu remained silent, he was stunned and didn't know what to do. These people had the right to avenge their families and granny Hu also deserved to die. But he couldn't see Zhu Lei'Er die either.

Besides he is still recovering from the intoxicating incense and because of the traveling is also quite tired. He knew he wasn't a match for this young man now.

The young man said: "I'm telling you this, not because we're afraid of you. But I respect you for being a brave man and I hope you will back away from this affair."

Yu Peiyu said: "If I don't."

The young man said arrogantly: "If you can defeat me, I will let her go."

Yu Peiyu leapt of the carriage now and said: "Allright, it is a deal."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "I have a few words I want to say to my fourth uncle."

Yu Peiyu said: "I know what you're going to say, but.....I have to do this."

She took Yu Peiyu by her hand and said: "I have to say it, come over here please."

Yu Peiyu looked at the young man, the young man scoffed: "Rest assured, I won't harm old woman Hu before I have defeated you."

Zhu Lei'Er said softly: "Fourth uncle, why do you have to fight for granny Hu."

He didn't answer her.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I know you're doing this because of me, that youngster seems reasonable to me. If we would tell him our problem...."

Yu Peiyu interrupted: "If granny Hu knew that after she gives us the antidote, she will fall in the hands of these men. She won't give the antidote to us. Furthermore these people might not even believe our words."

Zhu Lei'Er was silenced and said softly: "Fourth uncle, you have really thought everything over."

Yu Peiyu said: "There is no other alternative, I must save granny Hu first and then she will save you. Words mean nothing now."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But...."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Don't worry! That young man might be strong but I'm not weak either. Besides I have recovered more than half of my strength now."

She gently pushed away Zhu Lei'Er's hand and walked over.

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him with love, sadness, respect, worry and melancholy. She knew that if Yu Peiyu has made his mind not even the might Jade Emperor can change his mind, so there is no point in debating or urging him to stop. All she can do is hope he will win.

But she saw that young man looking very confident. He must have extraordinary skills and have an awesome background.

Can Yu Peiyu defeat him?

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and sobbed.

The young man carefully observed Yu Peiyu and asked: "Do you really want to fight?"

Yu Peiyu said resolutely: "There is no other alternative."

The young man sighed: "It is a shame."

Yu Peiyu was observing him too and saw his adversary was very tranquil and calm. Even more so than the famous master Nu, not that this young man could defeat master Nu. But because he was more careful, cautious than the hot-headed master Nu, he was a more dangerous foe to Yu Peiyu.

Just standing like that the young man didn't reveal any flaws at all, and he hasn't even prepared himself for battle.

Yu Peiyu took a deep breath and generated his internal strength, he noticed that the effects of the incense were almost gone. However he felt a bit weak and his muscles ached a bit. Not strange if considering that Yu Peiyu hasn't slept for the last few days and has been traveling in haste. To be honest he knew that he wasn't in top condition to fight a formidable adversary but he had no choice.

Yu Peiyu used with difficulty to focus and said: "You go first."

The young man said: "I never show mercy in battles."

In a flash they had already exchanged three stances, both knew that they were facing a formidable opponent.

Although both were young they possessed the grandeur of great martial arts experts.

There were another 10 men hiding in the bushes and surrounded the carriage too, they were friends of the young man.

All of them looked angrily at the carriage and were confident the young man would defeat Yu Peiyu.

Both didn't have any amazing techniques and used very simple ordinary stances but they both generated powerful internal energy.

The simple stances of this young man were quite unique, it didn't resemble any of the ordinary simple techniques in the entire realm.

It lacked the impressive grandeur of Shaolin and it didn't have the elusive element like Wudang. Furthermore it wasn't lethal, vicious or anything. In fact they looked very useless but Yu Peiyu felt that those stances were everything but useless.

Zhu Lei'Er was happy to see this young man's techniques were that simple, she wondered who his teacher was. Teaching such lowly and worthless martial arts.

She wondered why Yu Peiyu didn't use those impressive techniques he used against master Nu. Within three stances he would be able to defeat this arrogant young man.

She thought: This young man said he wouldn't show mercy, why are you showing mercy?

Unfortunately she didn't know the dire situation Yu Peiyu, his powerful will prevents him from admitting defeat.

Those simple, stupid stances are extraordinary in the eyes of Yu Peiyu.

He understands the power of this techniques.

Like true masters in go (*Chinese chess) a simple move in they eyes of laymen are actually wonderful moves in the eyes of experts.

Yu Peiyu never thought that such stances had such omnipotent power, if your every move has been cut off even if your internal strength is a bit more powerful. You will only be defeated sooner or later.

The young man was gaining the advantage, and it seemed he was going to win.

The young man sighed: "You're also very good, unfortunately your teacher is an idiot."

Yu Peiyu was angered by his remark and said loudly: “Not necessarily.”

The young man laughed: “Do you have some extra wonderful techniques up your sleeve?”

The degrading words of this young man has awaken his latent power now.

Furthermore Yu Peiyu was feeling very tired, he was even too tired to think of those difficult techniques anymore. He relied just on raw power. And he attacked this young man ferociously.

Both hands drew a circle in the air, and the two circles fluently followed each other up.

It was like an endless series of circles followed, the young man was taken by this attack. He quickly backed away and carefully examined Yu Peiyu’s attack before countering.

At this point Zhu Lei’Er saw that this young man was a powerful martial artist.

Because he could easily escape from Yu Peiyu’s all-embracing technique.

After looking for some time and avoiding Yu Peiyu’s attack variations and noticed Yu Peiyu’s internal energy was not that abundant anymore and he was getting tired.

He used a very simple but swift move to advance to a weak spot of Yu Peiyu and attacked.

Although Zhu Lei’Er saw that if Yu Peiyu would add another small variation into his technique he would be able to strike this young man down. However Yu Peiyu couldn’t add an extra variation, firstly he was too exhausted now and secondly the young man had used simple moves to block Yu Peiyu from creating more variations.

Zhu Lei’Er became very worried now and thought: It is amazing those simple dumb moves of him could render fourth uncle defenseless.

At this time they two of them had exchanged another ten stances, suddenly the young man yelled: "Stop!"

The young man leapt up in a vertical line for about 12 metres or so. Even if Yu Peiyu didn't want to stop he had to now, his adversary was not in front of him anymore.

Zhu Lei'Er had never seen such impressive display of the art of levitation before.

The young man asked earnestly: "Are you related to the Feng family in the south?"

Zhu Lei'Er asked quickly: "Do you know my third uncle?"

He looked at Zhu Lei'Er with a confused and shocked manner: "Your third uncle is Feng San?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "(*Humph) Since you know my third uncle, you have a lot of nerve to block our way."

The young man said: "You call him fourth uncle, so he's the brother of....."

Zhu Lei'Er interrupted: "My fourth uncle is the brother of my third uncle."

The young man turned at Yu Peiyu and asked: "You're the brother of Feng San?"

Zhu Lei'Er answered on behalf of Yu Peiyu: "Of course."

The young man looked at Yu Peiyu for some time and sighed: "The brother of Feng San is working for granny Hu. No wonder that the Feng family isn't that glorious anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "My fourth uncle is fighting you because of me. Not because of granny Hu."

The young man was confused and said: "Because of you?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Even you must know that granny Hu is the leading expert in using poison. And only she knows how to create the antidote for her poison."

The young man laughed arrogantly: "Those monkey tricks are hardly worth mentioning."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "You'll be singing in a different tone when you're injured by those monkey tricks."

The young man laughed coldly: "Even if she had ten sisters and they worked together, she still wouldn't be able to use her poison on me."

But now he looked at Zhu Lei'Er and said: "Are you poisoned by her?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Yes, my fourth uncle is taking her back to her home to get the antidote. You should know too that dead people cannot produce antidotes."

The young man frowned: "Why didn't you tell me earlier?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Would you have believed us if we told you?"

The young man stayed quiet for awhile and sighed: "I wouldn't have believed you. I would have thought it was a trick by granny Hu and you were either her disciples or relatives."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You're at least honest."

The young man said: "Even if you've convinced me, and I agree to look for her after she's given the antidote. She won't give it to you, because she knows her demise is near when she has cured you."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You're right. My fourth uncle understood this from the very beginning, so in order to save me he has to save granny Hu first."

The young man looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "You have gone through a lot of effort just to save her."

Yu Peiyu smiled lightly: "Wouldn't you do the same thing?"

The young man sternly said: "But do you realise how many innocent people have died at the hands of granny Hu. And how many more lives she's going to take. Just because you want to save this girl, you discard the lives of so many others."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I've thought about this too."

The young man looked at him carefully: "Are you planning on delivering her to us after she's provided the antidote?"

Yu Peiyu couldn't answer him.

Those were his thoughts, but he couldn't let granny Hu hear them.

The young man continued: "So you were planning to defeat us first, before delivering her to us later."

Yu Peiyu still remained quiet.

The young man said: "Either way we have to fight."

Yu Peiyu said: "It seems so."

The young man said: "You must know now, that you're no match for me in your present state. It is likely I will be able to kill you."

Yu Peiyu said: "Even so, I will have to battle you."

The young man said: "It is most strange that you put so much value in the life of someone else. But you seem to have little interest in your own life."

Yu Peiyu said: "I just know that a man should do what a man has to do."

The young man smiled: "Well said! It's been a long time since I heard such heroic words. It pleases to hear these words today."

He walked over to the carriage during his smile, Yu Peiyu blocked him. He said: "If you want to harm granny Hu, you have to defeat me first."

The young man laughed: "I just want her to give you the antidote."

Yu Peiyu said surprised: "She will give you the antidote like that?"

The young man laughed: "I have my ways of persuading her."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What do you suggest?"

The young man said: "You don't believe me. If granny Hu doesn't give you the antidote, I will give you my head."

The young man walked to the carriage, there was no sound in the carriage. Has granny Hu fainted of fear for this young man? Who is he that could strike fear in the heart of granny Hu?

Does he really have the ability to force granny Hu to give Yu Peiyu the antidote?

He opened the door and said: "You....."

He stopped talking and was shocked, the moonlight lit up the carriage. Everyone saw that black blood flowed from granny Hu's eyes, ears, mouth and nose. There was a sinister smile on her face: The smile said: Nobody could force me to give you the antidote! Zhu Lei'Er will accompany me in the netherworld.

Yu Peiyu almost fainted, he turned pale and was sweating. He hated granny Hu and could not imagine someone being this ruthless and evil.

The young man turned to Zhu Lei'Er said: "Is she really the only one who can cure you?"

Zhu Lei'Er stood there and didn't move, she didn't hear him.

Yu Peiyu said angrily: "Even if there is someone else, we don't have the time now."

The young man asked: "What do you mean?"

Yu Peiyu said: "She only has six hours!"

The young man asked frantically: "How many hours before dawn?"

Yu Peiyu didn't answer, one of the friends of the young man answered: "About six hours."

The young man was stunned and repeated softly: "Six hours.....six hours....."

Yu Peiyu turned around and shouted: "You have your revenge! Are you happy! If not slice up granny Hu's corpse, to proof yourself!"

He couldn't control his temper anymore, he vented his anger towards these men.

All those men lowered their heads in embarrassment. These men were normally good men, but because of their tragedies and their will to extract revenge they have become unreasonable rogues.

But seeing their reactions Yu Peiyu felt uneasy for falling out to them, those men bowed to Yu Peiyu and left.

Yu Peiyu lowered his head and wept.

Zhu Lei'Er hugged Yu Peiyu and sobbed: "Fourth uncle, it's my fault. I....."

Yu Peiyu interrupted her: "It's not your fault, I.....I.....have failed you."

Zhu Lei'Er wept: "Fourth uncle, listen to me...."

Yu Peiyu said: "Don't call me fourth uncle!"

Zhu Lei'Er trembled and said: "What do you mean?"

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly: "I'm not that much older than you, you should call me brother. Besides you don't want to be my niece, you want to be my little sister right?"

Zhu Lei'Er raised her head and looked at Yu Peiyu dazzled. Her eyes were filled with happiness, surprise, revelry but in a moment it turned into sadness.

Yu Peiyu looked at her innocent, bright, pretty face and watery eyes, he too was filled with sorrow.

He hated himself.

He thought: I knew her feelings all along, why did I just tell her that. I should have said those words a long time ago. Her life was filled with tragedy I should make her happy.

The young man sighed too and turned around not to look at them. He looked into the carriage and saw characters on the wall.

Granny Hu carved those characters on the wall with her nails:

First there is the constellation eating the day, now there is a celestial wolf.

The world is a big place, but I cannot hide anywhere. Only death is my salvation, but rest assured. Return my body and I will grant you.....”

Zhu Lei’Er now walked over and read those characters, she asked: “Who is this celestial wolf?”

The young man said: “I am that celestial wolf.”

Zhu Lei’Er looked at him and said: “Such a vicious name.”

The young man said: “It is also a name of a constellation.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “A constellation?”

The young man arrogantly said: “According to the Han analects: In the east there is a star named Wolf. It is very difficult to see this star because it appears next to the sun.”

Zhu Lei’Er frowned and said: “Don’t you have another name than this?”

The young man said: “Yes, I have. Namely Hai Dongqing.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Hai Dongqing isn’t that some sort of bird of prey? What does that have to do with celestial wolf?”

Hai Dongqing said calmly: “Isn’t a bird of prey a wolf in the sky.”

Zhu Lei’Er sighed: “The Wolf and the eagle are both nasty animals.”

Hai Dongqing said coldly: “The wolf is the most agile animal and the eagle is the most magnificent bird.”

Zhu Lei’Er looked at him and said: “Granny Hu compares you to Tian Chixing, are you his brother? He is fat and pale,

you're dark and skinny."

Hai Dongqing looked annoyed, but didn't answer.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "You're a wolf, are your friends celestial pigs?"

Hai Dongqing frowned but didn't say a word.

Zhu Lei'Er deliberately said these words to annoy him, she couldn't stand his cold and arrogant behaviour.

Yu Peiyu went into the carriage and tore off that part of the wall, he said: "Granny Hu didn't have time to finish the final characters, what could she grant if we returned her body."

Hai Dongqing looked pleased and called: "The antidote."

Yu Peiyu nodded and said: "I think you're right. She must mean the antidote."

Hai Dongqing asked: "Are you planning on bringing back her body?"

Yu Peiyu asked: "Could brother Hai tell me where granny Hu lives?"

Hai Dongqing stayed quiet for a minute and said: "She lives around here, about four hours away from here. But how do you know that this isn't a trick of her?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Correct! She might want to lure us back to her home, and hope her relatives could avenge her.

Furthermore when her relatives know that she is more or less killed by us, will they give us the antidote."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Even so, this is our only chance. Even if this is a trap I will have to go and see for myself."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "But....but I would rather die, than seeing you harmed."

Yu Peiyu said softly: "If I was poisoned, wouldn't you do the same thing."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "But.....I.....I....."

Hai Dongqing loudly interrupted: "I will go with you, with me around you will not be in any danger."

Zhu Lei'Er wiped her tears and said: "No need! We don't need your help."

Hai Dongqing ignored her and whistled loudly, a beautiful stallion galloped out of the forest. It was a splendid steed.

Yu Peiyu said: "Brother Hai, could you lend me this horse for half a day? I promise to return it after I have found the antidote."

Hai Dongqing said calmly: "This is my fault, I have a responsibility to retrieve the antidote."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted and scoffed: "Splendid! But in my eyes....."

Yu Peiyu interrupted her: "Lei'Er, don't be rude! Brother Hai's intentions are good."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "I know his intentions are good, but I just don't like his tone."

Zhu Lei'Er rode the horse, Yu Peiyu and Hai Dongqing used their arts of levitation.

After travelling for some time Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who is still left in granny Hu's family?"

Hai Dongqing answered: "She still has a mother."

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised and said: "She is very old herself, it is amazing that her mother is still alive."

Hai Dongqing said: "She only has a mother and a husband, the rest of her family...."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "A husband? Did you say she has a husband?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Yes, she has a husband."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "The old hag has a husband? How very strange?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Most women have husbands, there is nothing strange to that."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Nobody in Wulin has mentioned she has a husband."

Hai Dongqing said: "Most people in Wulin are very bad informed."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted and asked: "Who is her husband anyway?"

Hai Dongqing said: "You will know when you see him."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Why are always that arrogant and unfriendly?"

Hai Dongqing said: "I always talk like this, if you don't like my tone don't talk to me."

Zhu Lei'Er was angry and stayed quiet. After some time Hai Dongqing said to Yu Peiyu: "You must be tired after traveling so many days without resting."

He took over the wooden board with granny Hu's body and dragged it along.

Yu Peiyu smiled apologetically to Hai Dongqing.

Zhu Lei'Er suggested: "Why won't you tie the board to the horse."

Hai Dongqing said: "No matter whether she's alive or dead, she is not fit to ride my steed."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "You're carrying granny Hu now, so you're inferior to your own horse."

She thought this time she would embarrass Hai Dongqing, however Hai Dongqing replied: "This horse is my friend, I don't mind doing a bit extra work for my friend."

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised about his answer and smiled wryly: "You're very strange."

Hai Dongqing dragged granny Hu, and he didn't slow down. It seemed he was floating over the road.

Zhu Lei'Er was very interested who his teacher is and how he learnt such high martial arts.

She asked: "What happened between you and granny Hu? Is she your nemesis?"

Hai Dongqing just said: "Hmmmm."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Well, what happened?"

Hai Dongqing said: "That is not your concern."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Couldn't you reveal a bit?"

His answer was resolute and short: "No!"

Zhu Lei'Er was very annoyed and angry but laughed: "At least you have one advantage....."

She stayed quiet and hoped he couldn't resist to ask her.

However he stayed quiet, Zhu Lei'Er gritted her teeth and said: "Your advantages are that you're too pig-headed, arrogant and proud."

Hai Dongqing said coldly: "I have another advantage....."

He didn't finish his sentence.

Zhu Lei'Er thought: You want me to ask you to finish the sentence. Ha! But I won't.

Hai Dongqing stayed silent and continued to walk, it seemed he forgot what he said earlier himself.

Zhu Lei'Er couldn't help it anymore after some time and asked: "What is that advantage of yours?"

Hai Dongqing said: "I won't debate with young girls."

Although Hai Dongqing was cold and not very talkative but he seemed to be very talkative around this young girl, even he himself couldn't understand why. Somehow in his heart he just wanted to protect this sweet and beautiful young girl. But why?

Volume 6 - The Woman from the Blue Mansions

Chapter 26 : Looking At Flowers From A Balcony

Xiangxiang scoffed: "You agreed to marry her because she was dying. If she wasn't poisoned you would have never given her any consideration."

Yu Peiyu didn't know how to answer her.

Xiangxiang said sternly: "So you admit it! You're the most heartless man I've ever seen. I want to kill you."

Zhu Lei'Er was furious by his remarks, this man was belittling her in front of Yu Peiyu.

She hated when someone would belittle her in front of Yu Peiyu, but she didn't know what to say to him.

Yu Peiyu hoped that they would continue to talk, he hoped that Hai Dongqing could make Zhu Lei'Er forget about her tragedy. Furthermore he hoped Zhu Lei'Er forgot about himself.

Yu Peiyu also noticed that this proud and arrogant Hai Dongqing had a wonderful charisma.

He hoped that those two would get together when Zhu Lei'Er was cured again.

He knew that Hai Dongqing was a reliable man.

After travelling for a few hours they reached a wall, Hai Dongqing asked them: "Can you leap over this wall?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Over this wall?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Granny Hu lives here in this city, you would expect her to hide in a remote place."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I can leap over here with no problem, but your four-legged friend cannot."

Hai Dongqing said: "If you can do it, my friend can do it too."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "I would like to see that."

She turned to Yu Peiyu and said gently: "I'm feeling a bit woozy, could you hold me hand please."

The truth was she wasn't feeling woozy, she was afraid Yu Peiyu was still too exhausted and may not make the leap.

Yu Peiyu patted her hand and said gently: "Everyone thinks you're a naughty and playfull young girl, but in fact you're really gentle and kind girl."

Zhu Lei'Er blushed, and she felt warm and touched inside. But Yu Peiyu meant those words for Hai Dongqing to hear.

Hai Dongqing had passed over the wall with granny Hu's body without effort.

Zhu Lei'Er laughed coldly: "Look at his arrogant behaviour, he just learnt some martial arts and can't wait to display his skills to everyone."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "It is not surprising that he's a bit arrogant, young men should feel proud for their superior martial arts."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But you're very young too and your martial arts are very good. But you're not arrogant."

Yu Peiyu said: "Because I'm not as good as brother Hai."

Zhu Lei'Er said sincerely and gently: "In my opinion one Yu Peiyu is better than ten Hai Dongqings."

She didn't give him the chance to answer and they both leapt over the wall.

Because this was an era of peace, China is prospering now. The soldiers are very lazy now and didn't pay any attention to their duties. The four of them could easily escape their notice.

Zhu Lei'Er asked Hai Dongqing: "Well, how will your horse leap over the wall."

Hai Dongqing smiled: "Since when have you heard that horses can learn the art of levitation."

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned and said: "You said your horse could do it."

Hai Dongqing said: "I was just telling a joke to a young girl."

Zhu Lei'Er was very angry and couldn't retort, if she did she would become a petty girl again.

Hai Dongqing was really getting on her nerves.

It was late in the evening, the streets were deserted. After a few streets, they heard some loud noises.

They saw some drunken men leaving a brothel, some fancy-dressed young women were smiling and talking to rich men. And the servants of the brothel were smiling respectfully to the customers.

Some of those conversations were quite lecherous and disgusting.

Zhu Lei'Er had never seen this before and didn't know what they were doing. So she asked: "What are these people doing here?"

Hai Dongqing said: "This is the world's oldest profession."

Zhu Lei'Er was still confused and wanted to ask more. In awhile she understood what he meant and pouted: "Why do you take us to this place?"

Hai Dongqing said: "This is the place we are looking for."

Yu Peiyu was shocked: "This is where granny Hu lives?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Unbelievable isn't it?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "Of course, this is the last place where her enemies will look for her. She opened a brothel to fool her enemies, what a cunning woman."

Hai Dongqing said: "Also when people enter a brothel and see the courtesans they will relax and won't be that vigilant. That's how granny Hu gain her information on Wulin."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "You know a lot about this place, you must be a regular."

Hai Dongqing said calmly: "You're right, there are at least seven, eight courtesans who I regularly visit."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted, Yu Peiyu asked: "Brother Hai, how did you find out that this is granny Hu's home?"

They walked ahead and saw the characters Apricot Pavillion.

Two men dressed in servant's clothes were attending the front door, suddenly a forty year old man who looked very handsome and distinguished came out.

It is strange that such a character would be a pimp in this place, when a servant saw Hai Dongqing he said: "Young master Hai, you haven't been here for months. Let me tell the Miss Xiangxiang that you're here."

Another servant said: "It is a good thing that Miss Xiangxiang hasn't slept yet."

Hai Dongqing ignored them, and walked to that handsome man said coldly: "You're the proprietor of this place."

The man smiled: "Yes, indeed. Have we met before?"

Hai Dongqing said: "No, because most people who come here are for the courtesans. They're not here for mere servants."

That man still smiled, but he knew something was amiss.

He wanted to turn around and leave, Hai Dongqing yelled: "Stand still!"

The man said: "I'm just about to call Miss Xiangxiang."

Hai Dongqing said: "I'm here to see you."

The man was surprised and said: "Me?"

Hai Dongqing said: "I know who you are."

The man said with an enforced smile: "Did one of our girls offend you, sir?"

The man said: "Who was it, Xiangxiang? Xiaoxiao?"

Hai Dongqing kept shaking his head and said: "No, a granny. Namely granny Hu."

The man's face changed but laughed: "You must be joking, sir."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Don't harass this man! Tell granny Hu's husband to come out."

Hai Dongqing asked: "Do you know who this is?"

Zhu Lei'Er said with shock: "He is the husband of granny Hu."

The husband of that old crone is this handsome middle-age man.

Hai Dongqing continued: "Do you know why he is hiding here and doesn't want to see anyone?"

Zhu Lei'Er shook his head: "I don't know."

Hai Dongqing said: "Because he used to be a famous orthodox martial artist. If his family and friends would know he is a pimp here. (*Humph)."

Zhu Lei'Er was curious now and asked: "Who is he? How famous was he?"

Hai Dongqing said: "He's rather famous, he used to be the young master of The Myriad Wood Manor on MountHuang. The famous Flower Swordsman Xu Ruoyu."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Nice name! However it is a shame that his wife is the hideous granny Hu."

Hai Dongqing said: "You know that young women sometimes marry old men about thrice their age. This is a similar case."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That is different."

Hai Dongqing said: "It is no different those young girls marry to the old men for their wealth. He married granny Hu because of her martial arts."

Xu Ruoyu stood there looking a bit embarrassed, Zhu Lei'Er thought he would attack Hai Dongqing. But after a minute

Xu Ruoyu composed himself and said with a smile: "Please enter my house for a cup of tea."

Hai Dongqing scoffed: "We were about to enter anyway even without your invitation."

He gave the body of granny Hu to the two servants, Hai Dongqing had wrapped the body in a cloth to avoid attention from local authorities.

The two servants were a bit startled when they were handed this strange thing.

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "It is a priceless gift."

One of the servant smiled: "It must be a present for Miss Xiangxiang from young master Hai."

Zhu Lei'Er joked a bit with those servants, the servants felt inappropriate to answer anymore and remained silent.

After passing a few corridors they reached the main courtyard of the Apricot Pavillion. It was nicely decorated and looked very tranquil, however there were loud noises of laughter and heavy panting and moaning.

The sounds of moaning and panting were coming from lots of rooms from upstairs.

Zhu Lei'Er turned to Hai Dongqing and said coldly: "Those girls upstairs must be your friends."

Hai Dongqing grunted, Zhu Lei'Er said: "You really should pay them a visit, now that they're ill."

Hai Dongqing was stunned and repeated: "Ill?"

Zhu Lei'Er looked a bit annoyed and said: "Of course, they're ill. Can't you hear their moaning and panting? If they aren't ill why would they make such noises."

Hai Dongqing was very much amused and started to laugh.

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him very annoyed and said: "Why are you laughing? What is so funny?"

Hai Dongqing looked at her again and his laughter was gone. There was compassion and sadness in his eyes now.

Yu Peiyu sighed too in his heart, this young girl grew up under tragic circumstances. She is very innocent and naive, she is like an unspoiled white piece of paper.

Zhu Lei'Er figured out that she said something wrong but didn't know what that was. She didn't want to ask, so she remained quiet and was angry.

Xu Ruoyu came to her help and said: "I would convey your friendly messages to the girls. Thank you, Miss."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "I'm not really interested in their health, so you don't need to convey any message. I know very well why and what they caught."

Although she said that but she had no clue why those people were moaning but she was grateful that Xu Ruoyu came to her help.

Before long they reached the private quarters of this brothel, the two servants put the body of granny Hu on the floor and wanted to leave.

Hai Dongqing said coldly: "Carry it inside."

One of the servant said: "These are the private quarters of the old Madame, we cannot enter."

Xu Ruoyu laughed and patted the two men on the shoulders and said: "It doesn't matter, do as you're told."

The two men picked up the body of granny Hu and walked inside and put it down again.

Yu Peiyu turned to Xu Ruoyu and sighed: "You're a very vicious man."

Xu Ruoyu couldn't smile anymore and praised: "You have very sharp eyes, sir."

Yu Peiyu ignored him and turned to the servants and asked: "Do both of you have a family?"

One of them replied: "Ding San is still single, but I have a wife."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I suggest that you go home immediately, you might be able to see her for the last time."

Both men were stunned and didn't know what he was talking about.

Yu Peiyu said sadly: "The two of you already know too many of his secrets, he won't let you live."

They looked at Xu Ruoyu and asked: "Sir, what is he saying?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Look at your shoulders and you will understand."

They quickly took off their clothes and saw bruises on their shoulders, and a small puncture.

Black blood dripped out of their wounds and it smelt awful.

They begged for their lives, Hai Dongqing's eyes were filled with admiration and praise when he looked at Yu Peiyu. He now knew that Yu Peiyu was much more vigilant and observant than himself.

Xu Ruoyu smiled to Yu Peiyu: "You have very sharp eyes, but you're wrong about one thing. Even now they won't make alive out of this yard."

The two servants ran as quickly as they could but after a few paces they fell down and died.

Xu Ruoyu closed the door and said: "Please take a seat."

This man wouldn't think twice about killing a few men about a trivial matter, Yu Peiyu disliked him at once.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "You and granny Hu are really made for each other."

Xu Ruoyu smiled: "I did manage to pick up a few abilities from her in our marriage."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed again: "So she should have learnt your eloquence when she had the opportunity."

Xu Ruoyu thanked her, Zhu Lei'Er continued: "However silencing those two won't do you any good. You should kill another three extra people to secure your secrets."

Hai Dongqing said: "He doesn't want to us to live either. That is why he invited us in here. But he doesn't have what it takes to deal with us."

Xu Ruoyu remained quiet and kept smiling. Hai Dongqing asked: "You know whose body this is, right."

Xu Ruoyu smiled: "If my guess is correct, it should be my wife."

He didn't seem to be sad about her death, in fact he sounded a bit happy too.

Zhu Lei'Er asked with surprise: "Aren't you sad or something?"

Xu Ruoyu said calmly: "She has this coming for a long time, she made many enemies and I knew she would die at the hands of her enemies sooner or later."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You.....you....are fine with this."

Xu Ruoyu laughed lightly: "You do know that I married because of her skills, if I pretended to be sad now you'll probably laughed at me."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "In that case, we even helped you regain your freedom?"

Xu Ruoyu smiled but didn't answer, but that smile said it all.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "It is bad enough that you married because of her martial arts, you could have run away after learning it. But why do you want to see her dead."

Her voice sounded sad, and she attacked him ferociously. Xu Ruoyu quickly glided away from her attacks and said with surprise: "Miss, why are you suddenly this angry?"

Yu Peiyu gently intervened now.

Zhu Lei'Er yelled: "Men like you deserve to die!"

Hai Dongqing was also a bit surprised by Zhu Lei'Er's actions, but he didn't know that this incident reminded her of her own parents.

Hai Dongqing frowned and said: "Don't you want the antidote anymore?"

Zhu Lei'Er said angrily: "I want to kill him first."

Suddenly an old voice said: "Who is poisoned? This must be the work of my little girl again."

This person called granny Hu [a little girl], she can only be the mother of granny Hu.

A very old woman came out in an old expensive brocade, she was holding a Buddhist rosary and held a dragon-headed staff in her other hand. Two maids accompanied her.

It was quite a surprise to see this elderly, distinguished and amicable old woman to be the mother of that awful granny Hu.

Xu Ruoyu respectfully walked up and whispered something in her ear.

Old Madame Hu trembled and pointed at the body, she said: "That....that is her."

Xu Ruoyu said: "Indeed."

Old Madame Hu said: "Good! She is finally dead. I have told her so many times to stop harming innocent people, but she wouldn't listen. She sought her own death."

She started to weep, she said: "Take her outside and burry her. I don't want her near me again. I will just pretend I didn't have this daughter."

Yu Peiyu was surprised to see that the mother of granny Hu was such a reasonable woman. Although he hated granny Hu, he was feeling a bit sad for old Madame Hu now.

Old Madame Hu asked with a trembling voice: "Who is poisoned here?"

Xu Ruoyu said: "This Miss over here."

Old Madame Hu looked at Zhu Lei'Er and sighed: "Such a shame, how could she? Ruoyu, take a look and see what type of poison she used."

Xu Ruoyu wanted to walk over, but Zhu Lei'Er said: "She used the poison under her nails."

Old Madame Hu cried out: "She scratched you? Where and when?"

Zhu Lei'Er answered: "Tomorrow morning it will be the third day, and she scratched my hand."

Old Madame Hu felt relieved and said: "We are not too late."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Can she be saved?"

Old Madame Hu said gently: "Yes, of course. The Jade Emperor is merciful and will be benevolent to good people."

Yu Peiyu was very happy, all the trouble wasn't in vain. But now his fatigue kicked in, he almost fainted.

Yu Peiyu composed himself and said: "I am most grateful that old Madame Hu is so considerate. But there is something I have to tell you."

Old Madame Hu asked gently: "What is it?"

Yu Peiyu said: "We did not kill granny Hu, she committed suicide with her final breath. I have even brought along her final words, in there she mentioned the antidote."

Old Madame Hu smiled: "You're afraid that I won't rescue this young Miss, right?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Anyway I am most grateful for your help, thank you."

Old Madame Hu said: "You must be tired now, rest here I will get the antidote."

The maids carried granny Hu's body away and Xu Ruoyu accompanied old Madame Hu away.

Yu Peiyu wanted to say something but he was too tired and sat back into the chair.

Hai Dongqing said: "Don't worry, she will give us the antidote."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "If she doesn't?"

Hai Dongqing said coldly: "If she doesn't I will make sure she does. And she doesn't have the courage to do anything against us."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "She doesn't even know who you are."

Hai Dongqing said arrogantly: "When she sees the wooden board with granny Hu's final words, she will know."

Suddenly they heard a series of Bang! Hidden doors came down and sealed off the doors and windows in this room.

Yu Peiyu immediately jumped up and yelled: "We're tricked!"

Hai Dongqing said angrily: "This woman is even slyer than her daughter."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Furthermore she isn't afraid of the famous Celestial Wolf."

Hai Dongqing walked to the door and looked very angry and generated his full power to his fist and struck the doors.

They heard a loud clap but the extra wall stayed intact, it was made from iron.

Hai Dongqing turned pale, Zhu Lei'Er ran into Yu Peiyu's arms and cried: "This is all my fault.....I.....I....."

She couldn't continue and started to cry louder. She was like this for days now, she wanted to say something but in the end she wouldn't.

There was even strange smoke coming in from different sides of the room, Yu Peiyu yelled: "Poisonous gas!"

They quickly held their breaths. But how long can they hold their breaths.

Hai Dongqing gritted his teeth and used his palms, fists to hit the walls. But in vain.

The entire room turned into an oven now, it was very hot inside. Zhu Lei'Er was starting to sweat at her forehead, Yu Peiyu used his sleeve to wipe it away. Suddenly he saw that his sleeve was white, it was cement but where did it come from. When he looked up he saw a small hole in the roof.

Hai Dongqing's powerful energy couldn't punch a hole through an iron wall, but he made the ceiling shake and the ceiling was covered with iron plates.

Yu Peiyu leapt up and used his body and palms to smash a bigger hole in the roof, Hai Dongqing did the same.

After that, Hai Dongqing, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er escaped through the hole on the top.

They were standing on the roof, Hai Dongqing looked around and couldn't see anyone.

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and said: "The old hag and Xu must know that that room couldn't keep us trapped for long. They must be gone now."

Hai Dongqing said angrily: "I won't believe that they're willing to leave this place. They will return sooner or later."

With that he leapt of the roof and continued his search, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er came down too.

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "He is so arrogant and thinks he knows everything. But in fact he knows nothing."

Yu Peiyu said softly: "You mustn't forget about his good sides, he did save us back there."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "It was you who saw the hole in the roof, he should thank you."

Yu Peiyu smiled, he gently caressed her hair and said: "I will go upstairs again for a look."

He didn't want to use the word antidote, he was afraid he would make her unhappy with those words.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "It is no use, they've already left. They wouldn't leave behind the antidote and we don't even know what the antidote looks like."

Yu Peiyu said sadly: "But they left in a hurry so they might not have the time to pack things. They might even have hid themselves somewhere in the brothel."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Maybe you are right."

Yu Peiyu said: "I will start my search now."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "No, I don't want you to look."

She pulled his hand, Yu Peiyu said gently: "But why?"

Zhu Lei'Er didn't answer and just look in front of her daydreaming.

Yu Peiyu followed her look, it was dawn.

The three days are up, at any moment Zhu Lei'Er would die.

Zhu Lei'Er said sadly: "Do you now understand why I don't want you to leave me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I....will stay."

His voice changed, he really hoped a miracle would happen. Could Hai Dongqing bring back Xu Ruoyu and the old woman.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I've never drunk wine before, I would like to drink to my heart's contend. Would you accompany me?"

Yu Peiyu was still too shocked and said: "Where is wine?"

Zhu Lei'Er said sweetly: "This place is bound to have wine."

She pulled Yu Peiyu's hand and they walked through a few corridors. It was ironic to see that the flowers in the courtyard are withering away.

Suddenly they heard sounds of people being slapped and cursing. A group of men ran out with their clothes in their

hands, Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "What is that strange cold youngster up to again."

Yu Peiyu thought it was a funny sight too, but he couldn't laugh.

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "If he thinks that old woman would hide there, he is too stupid."

In a flash he stood in front of them, he looked rather tired and he was sweating.

Zhu Lei'Er laugh at him, Hai Dongqing looked at her and didn't argue with her. What is the point in arguing with someone who is about to die.

Yu Peiyu asked: "No sign of them?"

Hai Dongqing shook his head and said: "I will see if they have left the city. The two of you stay here, they can't escape."

He was gone again, Zhu Lei'Er said: "Just a minute."

Hai Dongqing stopped and asked: "What else?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I want to know where Miss Xiangxiang is."

Hai Dongqing was a bit surprised but pointed at a room and he was gone again.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I think the wine of Miss Xiangxiang is very good, let us go there."

She walked ahead and pulled Yu Peiyu's hand.

Xiangxiang had a birdcage with a parrot, the parrot said: "Xiangxiang come out! You have visitors, if you're too late I will break your legs."

Xiangxiang said: "Naughty bird!"

She laughed and came out, she looked rather pretty. Zhu Lei'Er recognized her as one of the courtesans they saw earlier.

She seemed to be an entire different person, she was a good host and prepared wine for Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er.

She was talking and smiling with Zhu Lei'Er, it seemed that they were old friends.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Haven't you noticed that something happened?"

Xiangxiang said: "I heard some noises, but that is it."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Do you know what is going on? Aren't you afraid?"

Xiangxiang smiled: "In our line of work we have to keep our customers happy no matter what. If not we won't receive our payment. No matter how we feel we still have to entertain our guests."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Do you mind entertaining me?"

Xiangxiang smiled: "I would love to be friends with a sweet and beautiful girl like you."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Initially I wanted to pester you because of a particular man. But now....nevermind!"

Xiangxiang said: "I would rather chit-chat with you than entertain any rich client."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Let us drink."

Xiangxiang said: "That is a coincidence, I have a few bottles of fine wine here. An excellent vintage, unfortunately there aren't any fine dishes here. I will see what I can find in the kitchen."

These courtesans have been trained to be very eloquent and being a naive and innocent girl, Zhu Lei'Er is totally mesmerized by this Xiangxiang.

When the feast was prepared, Zhu Lei'Er wanted Xiangxiang to leave. But she didn't know how to say that. But Xiangxiang understood and smiled: "I really should stay here and be a good host, but I think you want to discuss something first. I will drop by later."

She walked out and closed the door, Zhu Lei'Er smiled to Yu Peiyu: "I thought she would try to entertain you, but she

totally ignored you.”

Yu Peiyu smiled faintly.

Zhu Lei’Er laughed: “Perhaps she saw that I have a terrible temper, that’s why she is afraid to entertain you.”

She doesn’t know that courtesans like Xiangxiang can distinct in a flash who she should flatter to and how to use her “kind and considerate” character.

Many men have lost their fortunes because of her so-called kind and considerate character.

The wine was great, but Yu Peiyu could only taste the bitterness, after a few cups Zhu Lei’Er started to blush.

She smiled: “Now I know why so many people like to drink wine, it makes me feel so happy and free.”

Yu Peiyu said softly: “If you like it, drink a few more cups.”

Initially he wanted to advise her not to drink too much, but when he realised she was about to die he didn’t want to spoil her fun.

Zhu Lei’Er said sweetly: “Drink with me.”

Yu Peiyu said with an enforced smile: “I will always drink with you.”

Zhu Lei’Er stayed quiet for some time and said: “You don’t want to stay by my side.”

Yu Peiyu said:” Why would you say a thing like that.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Why are you this sad?”

Yu Peiyu said: “I.....”

He didn’t know what to say, he couldn’t be happy now.

Zhu Lei’Er said softly: “I know that I’m not very important to you.”

Yu Peiyu said sincerely: “Don’t say that.....”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “What do you want me to say? I don’t even know whether you truly like me.”

Yu Peiyu said: "Of course I truly like you."

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and pulled her own sleeve and asked softly: "Why do you like me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Because.....because....."

Zhu Lei'Er continued: "I know why you can't say it. It is because you don't love me."

She started to cry softly, Yu Peiyu gently caressed her hair and said gently: "Who says I don't love you."

Zhu Lei'Er lifted her head and her eyes were glowing with joy.

She looked deeply in his eyes and asked slowly: "Do you really love me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Of course I love you."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Do you love me enough.....to be my husband."

Yu Peiyu was taken by surprise.

Zhu Lei'Er said gently: "I'm a dying woman, but I will be your loving and faithful wife till my last breath. And after I'm dead I won't mind if you would remarry immediately."

Yu Peiyu's heart ached, her every word were like needles piercing through his heart.

She looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "If you don't want to I won't blame you."

Yu Peiyu said suddenly: "Nothing would make me more happier."

Zhu Lei'Er trembled with joy, she asked with surprise: "Really? You're not doing this out of responsibility."

Yu Peiyu said gently: "No, I am doing this because I love you. It is the wish of every man to have an enchanting wife like you."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him with her dreamy eyes and she suddenly hugged him: "I am so happy. I am too happy! I

want everyone to know about my happiness. I want to share my joy.”

She ran to the door and called: “Xiangxiang! Could you tell your friends to come here. I want them to attend my wedding banquet.”

All the courtesans came and brought different gifts, they said the most auspicious words.

Although those weren’t expensive gifts, but Zhu Lei’Er had never seen them before. She was thrilled when she received them.

This was happiness which Zhu Lei’Er had never experienced before.

All the courtesans were filled with admiration and envy, Yu Peiyu was the husband that every woman was looking for.

But only Yu Peiyu’s heart was filled with sorrow.

Zhu Lei’Er pulled Xiangxiang aside and whispered something in her ear.

Xiangxiang said: “Allright, I will take you there.”

Zhu Lei’Er went over to Yu Peiyu and said: “I will come back in awhile.”

Yu Peiyu asked: “Where are you going?” Zhu Lei’Er blushed and said: “You won’t understand.”

Xiangxiang smiled: “He should start to learn.”

Zhu Lei’Er smiled and disappeared out of the door with Xiangxiang.

Yu Peiyu felt melancholic when he saw her gone through the door, the courtesans all whispered: “Miss Zhu is very fortunate to marry a perfect man like young master Yu.”

“Look he can’t even bear to be separated from her for a short moment.”

Yu Peiyu’s heart was filled with sorrow when he heard their whispering.

Yu Peiyu was very tired and the only thing that kept him awake was his concern for Zhu Lei'Er.

He was hoping she would come back soon, but for a long time he didn't see her returning.

After another short time he heard footsteps and Xiangxiang came back. Yu Peiyu asked: "Where is she?"

Xiangxiang laughed: "Don't worry! Your bride won't run away."

Yu Peiyu felt a bit embarrassed but asked anyway: "When will she return?"

Xiangxiang said: "She is upstairs, she is doing something....She asked me to give you this letter."

All the girls were giggling.

One of them said: "Some say not seeing for one day is like not seeing for three Autumns."

With Zhu Lei'Er around those girls ignored Yu Peiyu. But now they're swarming up to Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu was trembling when he read that letter. He read the following:

Dear Peiyu,

For the past few days I have been trying to tell you something. But everytime when I want to tell you my secret, I was afraid you would scold me and hate me. I was never poisoned by granny Hu, that little poison of her cannot harm me. I pretended to be poisoned to test your feelings for me. I wanted to see whether you really cared for me or not. But when I saw the impossible trials we had to endure, even almost losing your life several times. I was too afraid to tell you the truth.

At several occasions I wanted to tell you everything, but when I saw the trouble you went through I was afraid to tell you.

I know you must detest and hate me very much, however I do not care because my wish has been fulfilled I was your

wife.

My biggest wish has been fulfilled, I can leave with a peaceful heart. I want today to last forever, there is only way to do that.

By dying that is the only way I can repay and make up for my mistakes.....

His sight became blurry, his tears were clouding his vision. Yu Peiyu stormed out the room and yelled: "LEI'ER YOU CANNOT DIE! WAIT....."

But Zhu Lei'Er couldn't hear him anymore, when he stormed open the door he saw Zhu Lei'Er holding a dagger. And her robe was red with her blood.

If Yu Peiyu was still the stubborn young man he would kneel to Zhu Lei'Er's body and cry loudly.

But now he didn't know how to express his sadness and sorrow anymore, he just stood there completely broken. He felt he had nothing to live for now.

Xiangxiang said coldly: "She is dead and you're just standing here. Although you didn't kill her, but she is dead because of you."

Yu Peiyu said in a stunned way: "Yes, I know."

Xiangxiang said: "She used death to repay you, how do you plan to repay her."

Yu Peiyu just stood there and didn't answer.

Xiangxiang scoffed: "You agreed to marry her because she was dying. If she wasn't poisoned you would have never given her any consideration."

Yu Peiyu didn't know how to answer her.

Xiangxiang said sternly: "So you admit it! You're the most heartless man I've ever seen. I want to kill you."

She raised her hand and wanted to slap Yu Peiyu. He didn't want to avoid that slap, he felt he deserved it.

He wanted to be hurt, he wanted someone to hit him. That way he felt that in this way he would be punished accordingly. But the hand of Xiangxiang didn't hit his face, in fact her index and middle finger sealed the acupoints on Yu Peiyu's chest.

Chapter 27 : The Shock

Yu Peiyu gradually woke up and saw Xu Ruoyu sitting at a table drinking wine.

Xu Ruoyu laughed: "Brother Yu, you're awake. I was disappointed that you did not know how to drink this fine wine. You should sip and savour the wine slowly, if you drink it like how you did. You will get drunk very easily."

Yu Peiyu knew this too, but at the time he was too sad and did care about how to drink wine.

Xiangxiang's fragile hands became as hard as stone, Yu Peiyu's acupoints were sealed. He fell down and looked at Xiangxiang with shock and disbelief.

Xiangxiang gently patted him on his face and laughed softly: "She is dead now and I know that you won't want to live anymore too. I will let the two of you see each other again....." Yu Peiyu passed out now.

When Hai Dongqing returned he went straight to Xiangxiang's room.

All the courtesans were still there, their faces were red and they looked happy and tipsy. Hai Dongqing didn't see Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu, he wanted to ask Xiangxiang.

When Xiangxiang saw Hai Dongqing, she looked a bit melancholic and happy.

She pulled his sleeve, and said: "Young master Hai, you have changed a lot since the last time we saw each other. All the other sisters were scared to death by you earlier, why are you so cold?"

She continued: "After examining my room, you know I haven't concealed a man in there."

He flung aside her hand and said coldly: "What is the meaning of those red candles?"

Xiangxiang smiled: "Haven't you seen those candles before?"

Hai Dongqing scoffed: "You get "married" at least once everyday, why the candles?"

Her face turned red and her eyes were watery. She lowered her head and said: "Women like me are not fit to use these candles. I know you look down upon me, but you don't have to say such mean words."

Hai Dongqing said coldly: "Is it possible for you to be sad? I want you to understand that I am not here to look for entertainment. Spare me those feeble words! You should know that I'm not a gentleman."

Xiangxiang started to cry and said: "I.....I....understand."

Hai Dongqing said: "Answer my questions clearly."

Xiangxiang said: "Yes, I will."

Hai Dongqing said: "What happened here?"

Xiangxiang said: "They got married."

Hai Dongqing asked: "Who are [they]?"

Xiangxiang said: "Your friends young master Yu and Miss Zhu."

Hai Dongqing was shocked and stunned, he lifted Xiangxiang and yelled with surprise: "Why would they get married here! Do you expect me to believe those lies!"

He used force in his hands, Xiangxiang called out in pain. She said: "I wouldn't dream of lying to you. Let me go, if you don't believe me you can ask them too."

Hai Dongqing asked: "Where are they now?"

Xiangxiang said: "They entered that room to consume their marriage. I can take you there."

He released her and looked stunned, shocked and sad.

Xiangxiang looked at him and laughed: "You're jealous, aren't you?"

Hai Dongqing said angrily: "What!"

Xiangxiang pouted: "I know that you're in love with Miss Zhu, but she....."

Before she could finish Hai Dongqing slapped her. She fell down and all the other courtesans were too afraid to speak.

Xiangxiang sobbed: "How could you? Why won't you just kill me?"

Hai Dongqing was very annoyed and shouted: "Don't think your tears will affect me. If you continue to cry I will kill you at once."

Xiangxiang stopped crying, she didn't dare to pout or create a scene anymore.

Hai Dongqing said: "Get up and take me to them."

Xiangxiang said: "Very well. But they aren't there anymore."

Hai Dongqing scoffed: "I knew your words were rubbish. Where are they now!"

Xiangxiang said: "Miss Zhu was very ill, young master Yu agreed to marry her to fulfill her final wish. So we agreed to help them prepare for their marriage."

Hai Dongqing believed this and sighed deeply: "What happened afterwards."

Xiangxiang said: "After they went into that room to consume their marriage, but when I entered with the wine.....Miss Zhu....."

Hai Dongqing asked anxiously: "What happened?"

Xiangxiang continued: "I saw Miss Zhu fell down and blood was coming from her mouth, eyes and nose. She looked very eerie, young master Yu picked up her body and screamed and yelled. He suddenly turned mad and ran out of here, he was gone in a flash."

Hai Dongqing said: "Why didn't you tell me this earlier."

Xiangxiang said: "The other sisters don't know about this, so I did not want to tell them. I am afraid that when they know that someone died in this room, they won't want to use it anymore. And they might even tell the customers, that way it might affect the business of our establishment."

This was a very convincing story and Hai Dongqing believed her.

If the customers would hear that people died here, they might go to another brothel and stay away from the Apricot Pavillion.

And Zhu Lei'Er's death was something Hai Dongqing has anticipated and Yu Peiyu being grief-stricken was also logical.

Hai Dongqing wasn't someone who was easily tricked but this story sounded very convincing.

He stayed quiet and looked sad after awhile he said: "If I find out that you lied to me....."

Xiangxiang said: "You will kill me, right. I will be here waiting for you."

Hai Dongqing turned around and walked away, Xiangxiang said: "Are you leaving now?" She ran up and pulled his sleeve, Hai Dongqing said: "I'm leaving now."

Xiangxiang said softly: "My feelings for you are true, but why are you so heartless."

Hai Dongqing scoffed: "Do you take me for an idiot! You don't have any true feelings."

He flung her hand aside and walked out with big paces.

Xiangxiang waited when he was out of the Apricot Pavillion, she scoffed: "You think you're very smart, don't you. But in my eyes you're nothing but a big fool."

A courtesan walked up and said: "That youngster is mean and nasty, why won't you think of a plan to kill him? Why did you let him go?"

Xiangxiang sighed: "Although he is a fool, his martial arts are very good. We may not succeed in killing him, I just made sure he left this place."

Xiangxiang said: "But if he returns I will know how to deal with him, furthermore our cover is blown. We're about to leave this place anyway."

The courtesan asked: "Have you killed that Yu Peiyu?"

Xiangxiang said: "No, our superior wants him alive, that's why brother Xu is looking after him now."

Yu Peiyu gradually woke up and saw Xu Ruoyu sitting at a table drinking wine.

Xu Ruoyu laughed: "Brother Yu, you're awake. I was disappointed that you did not know how to drink this fine wine. You should sip and savour the wine slowly, if you drink it like how you did. You will get drunk very easily."

Yu Peiyu knew this too, but at the time he was too sad and did care about how to drink wine.

Xu Ruoyu smiled: "It is fortunate that you did not teach your friend how to drink this wine."

Yu Peiyu asked anxiously: "What do you mean?"

Xu Ruoyu said: "Look for yourself, brother Yu." Xiangxiang came in and she was holding a beautiful young girl, it was Zhu Lei'Er she was still alive.

Yu Peiyu called out with shock, surprise and joy: "You're not dead!"

Zhu Lei'Er didn't look up.

Xu Ruoyu smiled: "Because this Miss Zhu did not know how to drink this wine, she became weak and tipsy very fast. She wanted to slit her throat but because her hands became very weak. So instead of slitting her throat she made a cut on her chest and fainted of the wine and the pain. The cut wasn't deep and you were too shocked to take her pulse."

Yu Peiyu was filled with joy and wanted to hug her but he noticed that his acupoints were still sealed.

Zhu Lei'Er begged: "Xiangxiang, I beg you kill me please. I can't see him anymore."

Yu Peiyu said gently: "I don't blame you, Lei'Er. Don't say those things, I want you to live."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "But it is my fault that you're captured by them. I.....I...."

Xu Ruoyu laughed: "What a touching scene! Even I am touched, but this isn't the time for this sort of romantic nonsense."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Granny Hu died because of him, and you hate granny Hu so you really should let him go. Please I beg of you."

Xu Ruoyu sighed: "I'm most grateful that brother Yu killed that awful wife of mine, but I have my orders not to release you."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Tell the mother of granny Hu to come here, I will talk to her."

Xiangxiang smiled: "I'm afraid it is too late, she is dead."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Did Hai Dongqing kill her?"

Xiangxiang said: "He doesn't have that sort of ability yet."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Where were you at the moment?"

Xu Ruoyu laughed: "When you stormed out through the roof, I entered the room you just left. You turned the entire brothel upside down but forgot to look for one place."

Yu Peiyu sighed and praised Xu Ruoyu for being clever in his heart.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who killed the old woman?"

Xu Ruoyu smiled: "It was I."

Zhu Lei'Er exclaimed with surprise: "You?"

Xu Ruoyu said: "I think by the time you came here her body was already rotting away."

Xiangxiang laughed but suddenly her voice changed: "Good! She is finally dead. I have told her many times not to kill innocent people anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at her and said: "You were that old woman?"

Xiangxiang smiled sweetly: "That was me."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "After you escaped from that room, you removed your disguise and went back to your own room. No wonder Hai Dongqing couldn't find the old crone."

Xiangxiang said: "You're right."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "The two of you wanted to betray granny Hu for a long time, so when she left her home you killed her mother. And because of the old woman hardly revealed herself to others nobody suspected a thing."

Xu Ruoyu smiled: "As you know I married her because of her martial arts, I have learnt almost 90 percent of her skills. I couldn't stand her hideous face anymore and everytime when I saw her I wanted to throw up. Unfortunately the opportunity never arose, but now."

Xiangxiang said: "Originally we wanted to kill her after she returns but now this way saved us a lot of work."

Zhu Lei'Er blinked with her eyes and said: "But we helped you, you should really let us go."

Xu Ruoyu said: "As I said we have our orders from our superior."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Superior? Who is that?"

Xu Ruoyu said: "You will soon find out."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Do we know your master?"

Xiangxiang said: "I think you might have met."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Yu Peiyu and Yu Peiyu looked at her, both thought of the same person: Yu Fanghe.

Yu Fanghe used a similar trick in the Heavenly Silkworm Sect.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "So do you not want to avenge granny Hu."

Xu Ruoyu yawned and rubbed his eyes, he said: "If we wanted to avenge the old crone we will look for Hai Dongqing."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Have you planned something against him."

Xiangxiang said: "If our superior wants us to deal with him, we will deal with him. If not, he is not worthy of our attention."

After awhile both looked very sleepy and tired, Xiangxiang looked like she aged with ten years in a short while.

They were yawning and rubbing their eyes, and Xu Ruoyu kept blowing his nose.

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised to see this sudden change in them.

Xiangxiang yawned: "Do you have something left?"

Xu Ruoyu said: "Hmm?"

Xiangxiang scoffed: "I knew you were hiding out on me, give me some if not you will be sorry."

Xu Ruoyu was even too tired to open his eyes, he yawned: "If I have hidden some, I am your son."

Normally these two would talk rather politely to each other, but now they were quite rough.

And what was that thing they needed.

Yu Peiyu was suspicious too, suddenly the courtesans said: "Our master is here."

Xu Ruoyu and Xiangxiang looked excited and walked to the door and stood there respectfully.

A group of nine people entered wearing long cloaks and big straw hats.

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "The chancellor of Wulin is even too afraid to show us our true face."

One of the nine said: "I'm not the chancellor of Wulin, at least not yet. But are you talking to me?"

The voice sounded clear and beautiful, it belonged to a young woman.

The nine removed their cloaks, they were all young pretty women. One of them was a bit taller than the other eight. And ten times prettier than the other eight women.

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "Yu Fanghe, show yourself!"

The taller girl laughed: "Do you think I am Yu Fanghe?"

Yu Peiyu recognized this girl as the horrible and maniacal Ji Lingfeng, it was a long time since they met.

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "You are surprised to see me, weren't you expecting me?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I should have guessed it was you. When I saw their changes I should have guessed you had a hand in this."

Ji Lingfeng sighed: "It is too bad you did not have the time to taste my precious pills for a longer period."

Ji Lingfeng pointed at Xiangxiang and Xu Ruoyu and said: "Look at these two, the man is lecherous pig and the woman is a nymphomaniac. But I can tell you that these two do not have an affair and haven't even touch each other."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why is that?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "Because their interest lies somewhere else now. And do you know what that is?"

Zhu Lei'Er stayed quiet, Ji Lingfeng continued: "Because they are addicted to my pills of happiness. And when they're

addicted to my pills they won't have any interest except working for me."

Zhu Lei'Er asked with surprise: "Pills of happiness?"

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "It is a gift from the gods themselves. Do you wish to try?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I wouldn't mind tasting it, I like poisonous things. The more poisonous the better."

Yu Peiyu shouted: "Do you want to become like those two! Look at them because of those damn pills they are slaves of her! They don't have their freedom and lives anymore. For those pills they are willing to betray themselves!"

Zhu Lei'Er had never seen Yu Peiyu this angry before, he must really hate these pills she thought.

Xu Ruoyu and Xiangxiang lowered their heads, when they heard Yu Peiyu's words. They felt embarrassed.

Yu Peiyu said: "I was addicted to these pills too, it is possible to break free from it. If you have the courage and the tenacity you will succeed. You can regain your freedom and lives."

Xu Ruoyu and Xiangxiang looked anxious, they wanted to fight their addiction like Yu Peiyu said.

Ji Lingfeng took out a small box and took out a few pills. She said: "These pills were for you, but now you don't want them anymore. I will just have to give them to someone else."

Their ambition to fight it was gone now, they knelt down and started to kowtow to Ji Lingfeng. They begged: "I want them, I do not want to stop using those pills."

Ji Lingfeng said coldly: "So you have no intentions of rebelling against me."

Both of them said: "I wouldn't dare."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Are you willing to be my slaves for the rest of your lives."

Both of them said: “Yes, I am willing.”

Ji Lingfeng scoffed: “Useless slaves! Here take it!”

She threw the box and the pills on the floor, Xu Ruoyu and Xiangxiang were acting like dogs and were picking up those pills like frantic lunatics.

Chapter 28 : A Mysterious Youngster

The man asked: "May I ask what your name is, sir?"

The young man smiled: "I wish I had a famous and imposing nickname, but I'm just a nameless youngster."

Wang Yuluo coughed dryly: "This is young master Yang Zijiang, his family is an old friend of chancellor Yu....."

Yu Peiyu closed his eyes, he didn't want to see their degrading actions. Ji Lingfeng said calmly: "Now you understand the power of my pills, not everyone can be like you. Only you have the tenacity and the will to break from my pills."

She smiled to Yu Peiyu. He still ignored her.

Ji Lingfeng said: "Why do you ignore me? We are old friends and I have helped you many times. Why do you always run away from me when you see me."

Yu Peiyu stayed quiet for a moment and sighed in the end: "You're right. You have helped many times, but....."

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "Don't worry, I don't want you to repay me."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What do you want from me?"

Ji Lingfeng answered: "I just want to make a deal with you."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What kind of deal?"

She walked around Yu Peiyu and stared at him, she said: "From the very first time we met, I knew you're extraordinary."

Yu Peiyu stuttered: "What....what is so extraordinary about me?"

Ji Lingfeng waved her hand and Xu Ruoyu, Xiangxiang and the other eight girls left. She closed the door and said

calmly: "Firstly, you're the only son of Yu Fanghe, but....."

Before she could finish, Zhu Lei'Er loudly interrupted: "You say that he is the son of Yu Fanghe?"

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "You don't know? You're right, with the exception of me and old man Gao. Nobody knows this."

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned and looked at Yu Peiyu with her startled eyes.

Ji Lingfeng said: "It is very glamorous to be the son of the chancellor of Wulin. But why did he have to pretend to be dead and assume the identity of a new Yu Peiyu?"

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why....why is that?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "He doesn't acknowledge this Yu Fanghe as his father, he even broke his ties with his fiancée Lin Daiyu. That day when I saw her stabbing you with her sword, I felt sad for you. You would rather see her hating you than explaining your problems to her."

Zhu Lei'Er bit her lip and said: "Because perhaps they do not understand him.....But I do understand, because I too....."

She stopped talking, Ji Lingfeng said: "Do you think his father did something bad to him?"

Zhu Lei'Er stayed quiet and Ji Lingfeng said: "Your situation is different than his."

Ji Lingfeng said calmly: "It is different because this Yu Fanghe is an imposter too."

Zhu Lei'Er called out with surprise, Yu Peiyu's face changed.

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "So many people in history think that their secrets would never be exposed. However they are too foolish and naive, you can never keep secrets hidden too long from the world. Heaven works in strange ways, I must be the last person you expect to see here and there back then."

Yu Peiyu said: "Are you talking about that day in the inn?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "Exactly, it was fate that brought us together in that inn."

Yu Peiyu repeated softly: "Fate.....fate....."

Ji Lingfeng said: "When I saw you together with Lin Daiyu, I was startled too."

Yu Peiyu asked: "I was meaning to ask you, what were you doing there anyway?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "I was following Ximen Feng and others, I suspected that they were up to no good."

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "So you followed them and they lead you to me."

Ji Lingfeng said: "I didn't expect to find you there, it was also a surprise to see Hong Lianhua there. I knew that the Beggars Association was holding an assembly in Sichuan province."

Yu Peiyu said: "So many coincidences."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Hong Lianhua was even more surprised to see you and Lin Daiyu. The normally the ever so cold Miss Lin Daiyu was travelling with a mysterious young man. And you lodge in the same inn and stayed in the same room."

Zhu Lei'Er wanted to ask something, but she looked at Yu Peiyu and didn't ask.

Ji Lingfeng said: "Hong Lianhua was suspicious, so he sent a disciple to investigate."

Yu Peiyu smiled coldly: "So that waiter was sent to spy on us, I found him very suspicious from the start. He kept staring at Miss Lin and he came into our room with feeble excuses."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Didn't you suspect that waiter was sent by Hong Lianhua?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Although I did suspect a bit, but I wasn't sure."

Ji Lingfeng said: "That Song Si is also my subordinate, that is something you and Hong Lianhua didn't know."

Yu Peiyu said: "Is he addicted too?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "Yes, before he reported to Hong Lianhua he made a report to me. He told me that you and Miss Lin were both behaving strangely, the second time he entered he saw Miss Lin in tears and you were facing the wall."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What did Song Si have to say?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "He told me that he and Miss Lin had met before when she was in trouble some months ago. She also gave him a message to deliver to Hong Lianhua."

Yu Peiyu remembered Hong Lianhua telling him that story, she gave him a pouch in it was a piece of paper with the characters Trust Yu Peiyu and help him.

It was only months ago, but to him it seemed like an entire lifetime.

Ji Lingfeng said: "I was very curious when I heard Song Si's report so I decided to have a look. It was a coincidence to see Hong Lianhua and Ximen Feng there too."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "It was a busy day that day in the inn."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Afterwards I saw Miss Lin storming out of her room holding her sword. She was crying, cursing creating quite a scene. Why was that?"

Yu Peiyu looked pensive and said: "Because I did not tell her who I was, and she hates me for doing something horrible to her. So she wanted to kill me."

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "She may fool Ximen Feng and Hong Lianhua with this charade, but not me."

Yu Peiyu said: "You don't believe this?"

Ji Lingfeng shook her head: "Not a word."

Yu Peiyu said: "What happened in your esteemed opinion?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "Firstly, she knew you and the so-called deceased Yu Peiyu are the same person. Otherwise she wouldn't travel with you."

Yu Peiyu stuttered: "Maybe.....maybe she just wanted to wait for an opportunity to kill me."

Ji Lingfeng laughed: "If she wanted to kill you she had plenty of chances. Why would she try and kill you there? She just wanted to put up a show and hoped to trick the spies of Yu Fanghe."

Yu Peiyu looked awfully pale and said: "A show?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "She knew that Ximen Feng and others were following you and were spying on you. She created that scene to fool them that you're not the Yu Peiyu they want."

Yu Peiyu stayed silent for a moment before asking: "What else?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "There is nothing else, I just have great admiration for your fiancée. Miss Lin is a very intelligent and courageous girl, she will be the perfect wife."

When Zhu Lei'Er heard the word [wife], her face turned red and then pale again. She wanted to cover her ears.

Ji Lingfeng continued: "Also I wanted to warn you that you may fool Yu Fanghe for a moment but not forever. He is bound to get to the bottom of this. But when you saw me you ran away as fast as you could."

Yu Peiyu now asked very earnestly: "What sort of deal were you suggesting earlier?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "If I revealed your secrets in open, you will be dead within a few days. But rest assured I will protect your secrets very well and I am even planning to help you."

Yu Peiyu said: "Help me?"

Ji Lingfeng said slowly: "I want to help you destroy that fake Yu Fanghe."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply: "Of course you want to become the new chancellor of Wulin in order to become it, you have to eliminate Yu Fanghe. And the only way you can successfully remove him is by working together with me to expose his crimes."

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "We have a common goal."

Yu Peiyu said: "What if I refuse?"

Ji Lingfeng said calmly: "I will kill you now."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "It seems I have no other choice."

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "It seems so. And I will fully support you, you have no idea how much my power has grown. There are subordinates of me spread across the entire land. With only one order they are at your disposal."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "With that much power why do you want to become the chancellor of Wulin."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Some people like to drink, some people like women but I love power!"

Yu Peiyu said: "Power?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "If one hasn't tasted it before, one doesn't know the joys of it. My biggest wish is to see everyone in Wulin bow before me. At this point my operation is only conducted in secret, if I fail everything is gone."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "It is said that drinking and prostituting kills, but in my eyes power is even more horrifying."

Ji Lingfeng's eyes were burning with passion and said: "But power is something that is desired and wanted by many."

Yu Peiyu said: "But now that Yu Fanghe is the chancellor, you are plotting against him. But when you're the chancellor someone would rebel against you too."

Ji Lingfeng said: "When you become an emperor, there are bound to be usurpers or rebels. However if most of the people fear and respect you, those few traitors won't matter to me."

Yu Peiyu asked: "How long can you stay the chancellor?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "If my wish comes true.....Even if it was only for one day I will be very happy."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply and said softly: "Power.....power, what an abominable concept!"

Ji Lingfeng said: "We are not here to discuss ethics or philosophies of life. There are two roads for you to pick, one work with me. Two: Die!"

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "I have one condition too, if you won't comply I will rather die."

Ji Lingfeng said: "What is that condition?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I don't want anything to do with those pills of happiness, I don't even want to hear that name."

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "You think it is cheap to make those pills? Since you already agree to help me I won't waste those pills on you."

Yu Peiyu said: "My word is enough for you?"

Ji Lingfeng smiled sweetly: "I can only trust one person in this world and that is you. Besides I know too many of your secrets, you wouldn't dream of defying me. But most important we have a common enemy we need to deal with."

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "It seems in order to defeat Yu Fanghe I have to work together with people like you."

Ji Lingfeng said seriously: "Indeed, all those Wulin people from the orthodox schools are at his side. They won't believe your story and help you."

The funny thing is that the mission of Yu Peiyu was righteous and good, but in order to succeed he has to work with evil and heretic people. The irony of life!

In order to live Yu Peiyu had to die once, for the past months he had experienced the most strange events.

Zhu Lei'Er now understood that Yu Peiyu's tragedy was even sadder than her own tragedy. Furthermore Yu Peiyu had never told her about his own events, she looked at him dreamily and was sobbing.

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "Zhu Lei'Er.....Zhu Lei'Er.....what an interesting name. Do you have a lot of tears."

{Note: Lei'Er= tears}

Zhu Lei'Er angrily said: "At least I'm not a coldhearted monster like you."

Ji Lingfeng sighed: "Most people can't curse and sob at the same time."

Zhu Lei'Er retorted: "Some people can smile friendly and kill innocent people at the same time."

Ji Lingfeng said: "When it comes to that I'm no match for Lady Zhu and Miss Zhu."

Zhu Lei'Er was startled and asked: "How do you know who I am?"

Ji Lingfeng said calmly: "If I don't know who you are, I wouldn't tell you all that I know."

Zhu Lei'Er sternly asked: "How do you know?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "I want to become the new chancellor of Wulin, if I don't even know these little secrets how can I defy Yu Fanghe. By the way congratulations! I forgot today you got married to our young master Yu."

Yu Peiyu didn't say a word but just looked at Zhu Lei'Er, she looked very pale and started to cry again.

She trembled and sobbed: "You.....you don't have to mock me."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Who is mocking you?"

Zhu Lei'Er bit her lips and said: "You know that he isn't willing to marry me. He doesn't take this.....marriage.....serious."

She started to cry sadly now, Ji Lingfeng: "What do you mean not serious? Marriage is a very serious matter."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But.....I....."

Ji Lingfeng said gently: "Don't worry. Yu Peiyu is not the kind of man who will not acknowledge you as his wife, because you did not die."

Zhu Lei'Er was trembling and looked at Yu Peiyu, Ji Lingfeng smiled: "You don't have to ask him, I will teach you a method if he doesn't acknowledge you. That method is dying in front of him."

Yu Peiyu sighed in his heart, he saw Zhu Lei'Er looking at him dreamily. She said softly: "Don't worry I won't do such a thing....."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Why not if a man loves a woman, he is allowed to do all kinds of strange methods to court her and keep her. If he succeeds he will be praised, why can't women do the same?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But men and women are different....."

Ji Lingfeng said: "What difference? Why should women be inferior to men, my every move and plan is meant to bring glory to women."

She asked Zhu Lei'Er: "Are you inferior to most men? Of course not, why do you look down upon yourself?"

Ji Lingfeng held Zhu Lei'Er's hand and said gently: "Little sister, we're both women. And if we work together we can bring glory to all the women in the world."

Yu Peiyu looked at them and thought that Ji Lingfeng was practically brainwashing Zhu Lei'Er.

She unsealed Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er's acupoints and put the hand of Zhu Lei'Er in the hand of Yu Peiyu.

She smiled to Yu Peiyu: "I'm giving her to you, take good care of her. If not I will be looking for you."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Thank you."

Ji Lingfeng was a bit startled by him and asked: "Thank me? Why?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I was afraid she won't understand, but thank you for consoling her."

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "You must be blaming me in your heart."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I wouldn't dare. But do you really know what happens kilometres away?"

Ji Ling smiled mysteriously: "Have you forgotten that song I sang to you?"

Yu Peiyu was amused and laughed: "Don't tell me that you understand the language of the birds?"

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "If I didn't understand their tongue, I wouldn't save you out of that well in my manor."

Yu Peiyu said: "But that was Miss Ji Lingyan....."

Ji Lingfeng laughed: "How do you know that I am not Ji Lingyan? Who is Ji Lingyan? And who is Ji Lingfeng? Can you tell the difference? How well do you know them?"

Yu Peiyu was very confused and scared now, originally he knew who was who but now.....

These two sisters were filled with mystery, Ji Lingfeng was intelligent and ambitious. Ji Lingyan was mentally handicapped, but that could be an act too.

Ji Lingfeng said: "Do you now know who I am?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I really can't tell."

Ji Lingfeng laughed: "The biggest weakness of humans is that they are too confident."

Suddenly someone knocked at the door: "I have something to report, mistress."

It was Xiangxiang, Ji Lingfeng became her regular self again.

Ji Lingfeng asked: "What is it?"

Xiangxiang said: "There are three customers here."

Ji Lingfeng frowned and said: "I told you to put up a notice that we will be closed for the next few days."

Xiangxiang said: "I did what you told, mistress. I have already told a lot people to go somewhere else. But these three were adamant in coming in."

Ji Lingfeng said earnestly: "Go and see how they look like?"

Xiangxiang said: "Xiaofang at the door didn't know what to do, so she informed me. The three won't leave and are still standing in front of the main door."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Have you seen how they look like?"

Xiangxiang said: "I couldn't see clearly because it is dark outside, but at least two of those men are quite old. And they were riding steeds that are only available in the northern regions. It seems that they came from a long way."

Ji Lingfeng said: "And their faces?"

Xiangxiang said: "They are wearing long cloaks and large straw hats with veils in front. But one of them only has one arm."

Ji Lingfeng said: "They don't want anyone to see their true appearances."

Xiangxiang said: "I think so too, mistress."

Ji Lingfeng looked pensive and scoffed: "Are they here to deal with me? Let me have a look myself."

Zhu Lei'Er was very much herself with Ji Lingfeng around but now she was gone, she felt uneasy again.

Zhu Lei'Er didn't know what he was thinking, he looked very charming and tranquil like ever.

She didn't know that Yu Peiyu was feeling very restless too, how must he treat her in the future.

Yu Peiyu couldn't bear to hurt her self-esteem and feelings. Furthermore Zhu Lei'Er had her share of tragedies, she was also very stubborn and sensitive.

Even if Zhu Lei'Er wasn't still a bit too young, and if Yu Peiyu loved her deeply. He couldn't ask her to become his wife, because.....because.....

Because he could not forget Lin Daiyu.

He did not know what to say to Zhu Lei'Er, they two of them were alone and didn't know what to say to each other. There was an awful silence.

When they heard Ji Lingfeng walking back again both got up and rushed to the door, when they met each other at the door they stopped. They looked at each other, Zhu Lei'Er hoped that Yu Peiyu didn't see her face. However Ji Lingfeng just lit up the room and Zhu Lei'Er's pretty face was blushing.

Ji Lingfeng laughed: "All the brides are the same in the world, all of them have to blush sometime."

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head further, she never thought her face could become even redder than that.

Yu Peiyu coughed dryly: "Who are those men?"

Ji Lingfeng answered: "I don't know, I didn't want to look. They came here to meet up with someone. Wulin people meeting up with each other in brothels isn't strange."

Yu Peiyu said: "But why the long cloaks and large hats."

Ji Lingfeng said: "They are up to no good, that is for sure. But so long as it has nothing to do with us, I really don't care."

Yu Peiyu looked pensive and said: "I want to have a look."

Ji Lingfeng smiled: "I never thought our young master Yu is a busybody, haven't you got enough worries of your own?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "Because I have so many worries an extra few won't matter. Furthermore I just have this feeling that these men might be connected to that Yu person."

Ji Lingfeng looked interested too and said: "It is not a problem if you want to observe them, Xiangxiang is now

entertaining them and she will be able to trick them into revealing their secrets.”

Zhu Lei’Er sneered: “Unlikely.”

Ji Lingfeng smiled: “If a girl become a courtesan for three years, she will become very observant. Nothing can escape from her eyes, who is rich and poor cannot fool her.”

Zhu Lei’Er smiled.

Xiangxiang came in again, Ji Lingfeng asked: “Well?”

Xiangxiang said: “They are in the master room.”

Ji Lingfeng said: “Why didn’t you stay behind to entertain them?”

Xiangxiang sighed: “The three of them ignored me the entire time, I really wanted to look in the mirror if I have aged.”

Zhu Lei’Er smiled: “Perhaps they are deaf.”

Xiangxiang giggled: “Not at all. One of those old man leapt up and walked over to the window with every sound.”

Yu Peiyu frowned and asked: “How does that old man look like?”

Xiangxiang said: “He is about sixty, seventy years old, he looks very imposing. With one eye you could tell that he is a man of wealth. His beard is entirely white. I have seen many old men who become lecherous at their old age, but this one is different.”

Yu Peiyu asked: “Why is he different?”

Xiangxiang explained: “Old men who become lecherous are always very eager to crop up a feel when they see us. But he is very nervous and jumpy like he is about to engage enemies at any time.”

Yu Peiyu asked: “What about his accent?”

Xiangxiang shook her head and said: “He didn’t say a word. But the old man with one arm seems to be from the Su

province region. I heard that from his accent when he ordered for wine and food.”

Yu Peiyu asked quickly: “How does he look like?”

Xiangxiang looked disgusted now and said: “He only has one arm and is covered with strange red wounds on his face and hands.”

Yu Peiyu’s face changed a bit and asked: “How about the third man?”

Xiangxiang said: “That is a young man, he looks most normal out of these three. However he is very skinny, it looks like he hasn’t eaten for weeks.”

Yu Peiyu turned to Ji Lingfeng and said: “You said that it was not a problem to spy on them.”

Ji Lingfeng smiled: “True, most brothels have something strange about them. But strangest one must be this one, it is opened by granny Hu.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Strange? How come?”

Ji Lingfeng didn’t answer her and said: “Look don’t you think it is a bit too bright in this room?”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Not really, but now you mention it yes.”

Ji Lingfeng said: “There are four lamps here in total, those two on that wall are redundant. They are there to spy on people in the next room.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “So those lamps are there to fool people.”

Ji Lingfeng praised: “Very clever.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “So it is possible for us to look through those lamps. No wonder granny Hu knows everything that happens in Wulin.”

Xiangxiang said: “It is there for another purpose too.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “What do you mean?”

Xiangxiang said hatefully: “She knew that when men came into a brothel, they will act very degrading. She wants to

look at those humiliating acts of those men. And she is very happy when she sees those men bully, torture us. So she often dragged her husband over to watch us being humiliated. Only this way.....she.....she can be satisfied. She is so old.....that.....that.....she does...not have the interest for.....it anymore, this is the only way.....”

Ji Lingfeng interrupted her: “Enough! Are you afraid we won’t understand, spare us the details.”

Zhu Lei’Er looked at them with a puzzled look: “She is still not clear enough because I still don’t understand.”

Ji Lingfeng laughed: “The less you know about this, the better.”

Xiangxiang gritted her teeth and said: “One of the main reasons why she opened this brothel is to see us being humiliated. The old crone is also a disgusting sick old b-i-t-c-h.”

Yu Peiyu sighed: “She is dead now, your hate for her should also be gone.”

Yu Peiyu looked through the hole and broke out in a cold sweat, the old imposing man of wealth was Tang Wushuang, the man with one arm was Wang Yuluo.

He hadn’t seen Wang Yuluo for some time now, Yu Peiyu remembered that Wang Yuluo was heavily injured during the first encounter with the Three Magnificent Flower Ladies.

He looked very angry and sinister.

The other man had his back turned to Yu Peiyu.

There was a knock on the door, Tang Wushuang dropped his tea cup. He nervously jumped up. Wang Yuluo looked at him angrily, Yu Peiyu was certain that this Tang Wushuang was an imposter.

His hands revealed that he was a fake, the hands of a true expert in secretive weaponry are rough and steady. But the

hands of this man were smooth and soft, and the real Tang Wushuang wouldn't drop his cup that easily.

Although the mastermind was able to create the perfect replacement of Tang Wushuang, but he couldn't copy the hands of the real Tang Wushuang.

Yu Peiyu felt happy, this masterplan wasn't that perfect after all.

The knock on the door came from Xiangxiang and a maid who came in with food and wine.

Xiangxiang kept looking and smiling seductively at Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo.

But the two of them just ignored them.

Xiangxiang smiled: "Normal guests can't drink from this wine, I save this wine for special guests. Seeing that you are famous heroes."

Tang Wushuang sternly said: "How do you know we are famous heroes?"

Xiangxiang smiled: "I'm just guessing, your grandeur is awesome."

Tang Wushuang grunted: "We are just merchants."

Xiangxiang said: "My mistake, but I think you must be one of the wealthiest merchants I've ever met."

Wang Yuluo took out a golden ingot and heavily put it on the table, he said coldly: "Do you want this?"

Xiangxiang bit her lip and said: "Sir, do you want....."

Wang Yuluo said coldly: "Take the ingot and get out."

Xiangxiang smiled: "Yes, sir. Thank you." She put the ingot in her sleeve and was about to leave.

Suddenly the third man said: "Wait." His voice sounded young and indifferent.

He took out a golden flower with a series of expensive pearls. The craftsmanship was excellent, with one eye one

could tell that even with a 100 taels of gold you cannot buy this golden flower.

The young man said: "It is yours if you stay and drink with me."

Xiangxiang looked very excited and happy, this golden flower would be hers. She first looked at Wang Yuluo and Tang Wushuang, they looked startled and angry but didn't object.

Yu Peiyu was interested in this young man, he was travelling with Wang Yuluo and Tang Wushuang so he has to be a lackey of Yu Fanghe. But why did he make things difficult for the two of them, furthermore why didn't Wang Yuluo object. Was he afraid of him?

The young man laughed:

"Hypocrites.....hypocrites.....Although I'm a rogue too but at least I'm honest about it."

Xiangxiang who sat on his lap now smiled: "You're also sweeter and cuter than hypocrites."

The young man laughed: "Well said! Let us drink."

Wang Yuluo and Tang Wushuang raised their cups but weren't pleased.

Zhu Lei'Er whispered: "This man could be the sworn brother of Xu Ruoyu."

Ji Lingfeng whispered: "He is ten times more dangerous and cunning than Xu Ruoyu."

Yu Peiyu whispered: "He is truly a honest rogue."

The young man now loudly said: "I'm a bit tired now, come let us rest."

He got up and gently pulled Xiangxiang out of the room, the two of them entered the room next door to "rest."

It was quiet again in the room, Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo looked at each other and weren't looking very happy.

After some time Tang Wushuang sighed: "It is strange that chancellor Yu would order us to travel with him."

Wang Yuluo said earnestly: "The chancellor has his reasons."

Tang Wushuang asked: "Do you know who this arrogant brat is?"

Wang Yuluo said: "I don't know either. I just know that chancellor Yu has put a lot of faith in him and ordered us to follow his commands."

Tang Wushuang sighed: "How can a brat like him be put in charge of such an important task."

Yu Peiyu and others now knew that even these two didn't know who this young man was.

Yu Peiyu managed to see the young man's face when he left the room, he was rather handsome but too skinny. Yu Peiyu had never seen him before.

The two of them stopped drinking and eating, they looked very nervous now.

Suddenly Tang Wushuang laughed: "I hope he will come soon, when we've accomplished our task I wonder how that brat is going to explain himself to chancellor Yu."

Wang Yuluo looked at him and scoffed: "Aren't you afraid you will be exposed now?"

Tang Wushuang asked: "What do you mean?"

Wang Yuluo asked: "Do you know who you are?"

Tang Wushuang said: "Of course I know."

Wang Yuluo said coldly: "It is good that you remember. You're the famous leader of the Tang Clan, I hope you can maintain your grandeur as the leader of a Wulin school. The expression and words you said earlier were only fit for lowly slaves or lackeys."

Tang Wushuang looked embarrassed and was angered, he said: "I know you look down upon me because I was a

stable-boy. But what about you? Do you think you really are the hero Wang Yuluo?"

Wang Yuluo shouted: "Shut up!"

Tang Wushuang was angry and continued: "I won't shut up. What do you want to do? Kill me?"

Wang Yuluo said angrily: "If you don't I will kill you."

Tang Wushuang sneered: "Don't forget that I am the leader of the Tang Clan now. Furthermore if you kill me where are you going to find a new Tang Wushuang."

Wang Yuluo looked at him angrily for a few moments, he soon recomposed himself and laughed: "Don't take my words too seriously. If you're exposed all of us are in trouble."

Tang Wushuang laughed too: "I have been trained properly in these two years, don't worry."

At this point Yu Peiyu was very anxious, this Tang Wushuang was a stable-boy. He must be recruited because he looks like the real Tang Wushuang and has been trained for the last two years.

But what were the true identities of Wang Yuluo, Lin Shoujuan, Ximen Feng and the Dragonking? They could be cooks, beggars, servants or even pimps.....And how about the fake Yu Fanghe, how much better can he be?

Perhaps he was trained longer because he does know and is well-versed in the martial arts of the XiantianWujiSchool. But still his original identity cannot be much better.

When Yu Peiyu thought of this his anger grew.

Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo looked very nervous, Tang Wushuang softly said: "Why isn't he here yet?.....Why isn't he here yet?"

Wang Yuluo frowned and said: "If he doesn't come there is no point in worrying."

Tang Wushuang said: "This matter doesn't concern you, if he doesn't come what am I supposed to do?" He stroked his beard angrily.

Wang Yuluo said: "This is an important matter, he will show up."

Tang Wushuang sighed: "I wish he would hurry up."

Who were they waiting for? It is bound to be someone important for their masterplan.

Zhu Lei'Er wanted to ask the opinions of Yu Peiyu and Ji Lingfeng, suddenly they heard the cry of an owl.

Tang Wushuang leapt up and moved over to the window and imitated the cry of an owl too.

The person outside imitated the sound two more times and entered the brothel.

Before long he entered the room of Wang Yuluo and Tang Wushuang, it was a rather young man who wore a shabby green robe. His face was covered with dirt deliberately so no one would recognize him, his robe looked very dirty too.

When Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo, Wang Yuluo asked: "Where are you from?"

The man answered: "I was blown over here by the south east wind."

Wang Yuluo asked: "Did you see something on your way here?"

The man replied: "I saw adults eating sweets, and children drinking wine."

It was a very strange and silly dialogue but it was not uncommon that people in Wulin used these strange incoherent phrases to recognize each other.

Wang Yuluo looked pleased now and said: "Thank you for coming."

The man asked softly: "Why are we the only customers here?"

Wang Wuluo said: "The courtesans here are ill and refuse to accept anyone."

The man asked: "Ill? What kind of illness?"

Wang Yuluo smiled: "Women troubles, I think."

The man looked relieved and looked at the wine and food on the table.

Wang Yuluo asked: "Have you eaten yet?"

The man sighed: "To tell you the truth I haven't eaten for two days now."

Yu Peiyu has never seen this man before in this life, who was he? And why did he rush over here in this hurry?

What was he up to with Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo?

The man started to eat although he was very hungry, he was still very mannered.

Yu Peiyu knew that this man was bound to come from a distinguished family.

After he was full, the man told Tang Wushuang: "Take off your trousers and robe."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted and thought that man was shameless, but Tang Wushuang actually took off his trousers and robe.

Fortunately Tang Wushuang still wore his underpants, revealing his hairy legs. Wang Yuluo pointed at a scar and said: "I made this wound personally after seeing the scar of the real Tang Wushuang, it is identical."

Tang Wushuang smiled wryly: "The real Tang Wushuang's body is like a puzzle, it took us three whole days to make the identical wounds on my body. I had to keep drinking wine to drink away the pain."

The man nodded and said: "Very good, how about this wound?"

Tang Wushuang said: “Tang Wushuang.....”

The man interrupted him coldly: “Don’t forget you’re Tang Wushuang.”

Tang Wushuang quickly said: “Yes, of course. This wound was inflicted when I was young. I fell in love with a Yunnan girl and she asked me to retrieve her clan’s treasure, golden sand worth 10.000 taels of gold. I personally went to Yunnan and fought with the Eight Gangs of The Golden Sand. I challenged the eight elders of the gangs and killed them with my Tang secretive weapons, however I was hacked in the leg. Fortunately I had the famous White Ointment from Yunnan or else my leg would have been gone.”

The man asked: “What happened afterwards?”

Tang Wushuang said: “Afterwards I found out that that girl lied to me, she used me to retrieve the golden sand. She already had a lover and eloped with him when I was still recovering from my wound.”

The man sighed deeply: “That is why from then on you hate women from Yunnan, you claim that all of them are just cheap w-h-o-r-e-s-. That is also the reason why you forbade your son to marry Miss Golden Blossom.”

Yu Peiyu now understood Tang Wushuang’s hate for the Three Magnificent Flower Ladies. He resented all women from Yunnan because of his own personal drama.

Wang Yuluo now pointed at a scar on the back of Tang Wushuang and asked: “What about this one? Good enough.”

The man said: “Very good, it is identical.”

Tang Wushuang said: “This wound was inflicted when I was 27 years old. My cousin was killed by the Myriad Victories Blade, so I challenged him. Although he hacked me in the back, but I still could use my sword to pierce his throat.”

The man asked: “How many wounds do you have on your body?”

Tang Wushuang said: "Nine scars in total, four inflicted by sabres, four inflicted by swords, one scar was left behind by the famous Eight Armed Heavenly King, he used his lethal fire projectiles to injure my shoulder."

He paused for a minute before he continued: "Those four sword wounds were left behind by the Silver Bell Swordsman. He humiliated a senior of our clan, so at the age of 28 I sought him three times, the first two times I almost died at his hands. But the final time I was able to kill him."

The man asked: "Are there anymore old injuries?"

Tang Wushuang thought for a minute and said: "No, there aren't."

The man said: "Your teeth....."

Tang Wushuang said: "Of course I'm missing three teeth. In my younger years I was reckless and arrogant, so I challenged The King of Mount Changbai. He was proclaimed to be invincible in the field of palms and fists and was a respected Wulin senior of his time. Needless to say I lost and my three teeth were knocked out of my mouth, I couldn't eat and speak properly for five days."

The man said: "Don't forget this is one of your most glorious events in your life. The King of Mount Changbai was said to be a very hot-tempered man, many experts had challenged him in the past. Most of them were killed but not you, you only lost three teeth. Although you lost that fight you felt very proud and would often show it to your children, disciples and grandchildren which teeth were missing."

Tang Wushuang laughed: "I will remember this."

Yu Peiyu was very impressed by what he heard, The Eight Armed Heavenly King, Myriad Victories Blade and the Silver Bell Swordsman were all famous martial arts experts of who Yu Peiyu had heard of.

And the King of Mount Changbai Gongsun Huo was even more famous. He was the patriarch of the Changbai School

and when he was alive he put his own founded school on top of grand schools like Shaolin and Wudang.

Tang Wushuang had the courage to seek up these experts, that showed that he was a fearless hero in his younger days. But now he was a coward who betrayed Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu doesn't hate him anymore in fact he pities him.

The fate of Tang Wushuang could only be worse from now on.

The man sighed: "Some people will notice the slightest change, you have to be careful if not your life and the plan will be endangered."

Tang Wushuang said: "I understand."

The man looked pensive and said: "Now that you've retired you don't interfere with the affairs of the Tang Clan anymore, however your opinion is still asked when dealing with important decisions. Also everyday your disciples, sons, daughters will come at a regular time to listen to your teachings."

Tang Wushuang said: "That time is after my breakfast."

The man asked: "Do you know what you eat everyday?"

Tang Wushuang said: "People in Sichuan province don't eat congee. I eat fried rice with eggs every morning and an extra plate of tofu with peppers. The hotter the better."

The man asked: "Are you accustomed to that?"

Tang Wushuang said: "In the beginning I was dying, but after two years I'm used to it."

The man asked: "After how many days do you bathe?....."

The man kept asking Tang Wushuang little questions about everything, even how many times Tang Wushuang goes to the lavatory.

From this they could conclude that they have gathered all the necessary information on the real Tang Wushuang.

Ji Lingfeng whispered: "Yu Fanghe really put a lot of time and energy in this matter."

Yu Peiyu whispered back: "There is a big price."

Ji Lingfeng whispered: "The famous Tang Clan which has existed for more than 200 years is almost his."

Zhu Lei'Er whispered: "They were waiting for this man. This man is their informant on the habits of the real Tang Wushuang, but who is he?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Needless to say he is related to the Tang Clan."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Furthermore he must be very close to Tang Wushuang."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "He betrayed Tang Wushuang. If Tang Wushuang knew someone would betray him, he wouldn't betray others that easily."

At this time the man had stopped talking and everyone stayed quiet.

Yu Peiyu and others also stopped whispering, Wang Yuluo and Tang Wushuang were waiting for him to continue.

Wang Yuluo asked: "Is there something wrong, my friend?"

The man didn't answer immediately and poured a cup of wine first: "The art of disguise has been around for hundreds of years, there are legends of people managing to fool with the art of disguise even destroying entire clans in the end. However I have never believed these stories. But now,..... chancellor Yu is able to bring a new meaning to the art of disguise and with his ingenious plans..... Truly amazing!"

Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo both looked pleased.

The man looked at Tang Wushuang and said: "Chancellor Yu is really a genius for creating a lifelike imitation like you."

Tang Wushuang looked pleased and asked: "Can I go to the Tang Manor now?"

The man smiled: "Your trip to the Tang Manor will be perfect, no one will suspect a thing."

The man raised his cup and said: "Let us toast to our success."

Suddenly a voice said: "Don't forget about me."

The young man came back again and stood at the door, the man was very nervous and shouted: "Who are you?" He put his hands in his robe.

The young smiled: "Don't use your projectiles, I'm very much afraid of the Tang weaponry."

The man looked at Wang Yuluo and asked: "Don't you know that someone else is here too?"

Wang Yuluo smiled: "Don't be startled, my friend. He is with us."

The young man said: "I'm your friend, I'm also a friend of Yu Fanghe."

The man looked puzzled, how dare this young man call out the name of Yu Fanghe in front of Wang Yuluo.

The man asked: "May I ask what your name is, sir?"

The young man smiled: "I wish I had a famous and imposing nickname, but I'm just a nameless youngster."

Wang Yuluo coughed dryly: "This is young master Yang Zijiang, his family is an old friend of chancellor Yu....."

The young man laughed: "No need for that. Yu Fanghe doesn't even know who my parents are, even I don't know who my parents are. So no such thing as an old family friend."

Wang Yuluo looked embarrassed, the man looked even more confused.

Yang Zijiang asked: "Do you know why my name is Yang Zijiang?"

The man was too puzzled and confused and just said: "I'm sorry but I really do not know."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "You must be surprised why I'm asking you this silly question. I was found by someone near the YangtsekiangRiver hence my name. My parents must have found me very annoying and dumped me near the river. They were very smart."

The unknown man, Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo all thought: At least he knows that he is annoying himself.

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Fortunately I'm not here to make friends, you must find me annoying. No matter because I dislike you too, if Yu Fanghe didn't beg me to come here. I wouldn't be caught here alive with all the gold in the world."

All three men looked annoyed, the unknown man said coldly: "I would like to ask why chancellor Yu asked you to come here."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "You really don't know? Yu Fanghe was afraid that all of you might get killed, so he asked me to protect you."

The man scoffed: "Even so, we are very capable of protecting ourselves."

Yang Zijiang said: "Really?"

The man grunted.

Yang Zijiang smiled: "So you are of the impression that your martial arts are very good."

The man said coldly: "Not to be arrogant or anything, but my martial arts are passable enough to survive in the realm."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "In my eyes your martial arts are worthless, I can kill you as easily like squashing tofu."

The man angrily grunted and stood up and readied himself. Wang Yuluo and Tang Wushuang both didn't stop him, they too wanted to see what skills this Yang Zijiang had.

Yang Zijiang sighed: "You really want to compete with me?"

The man said angrily: "Yes indeed."

Yang Zijiang said: "Good."

In a flash he was gone, the man was stunned he wanted to turn around. But suddenly he felt someone blowing in his neck.

Yang Zijiang said calmly: "If I wanted your life, your head would be on the floor now."

The man angrily shouted and ten odd projectiles shot out of his hand towards Yang Zijiang.

The projectiles hit the wall and Yang Zijiang was standing where he stood before, it was like he never left his spot.

Wang Yuluo and others were shocked to see the swift movements of this Yang Zijiang, even Yu Peiyu was shocked.

He felt when it came to the art of levitation he was definitely inferior to this Yang Zijiang even the arrogant Hai Dongqing may not be his match.

The man's anger was gone, he looked shocked, scared and disappointed. He was sweating heavily.

Yang Zijiang asked casually: "Convinced? You shouldn't feel bad, in fact you should feel glad that someone like me is protecting you."

Wang Yuluo laughed: "My friend, your art of levitation is excellent. I have never seen such display before."

Tang Wushuang smiled too: "When it comes to this field, you must be number one in the realm."

These were meant as compliments but somehow Yang Zijiang looked very serious now and said coldly: "It doesn't matter that you say those words here, but if word would spread out.....(*Humph)I will die because of your words."

Tang Wushuang smiled: "My good friend, why would you say something like that?"

Yang Zijiang sneered: "In your eyes my art of levitation is very high, but that is because you've never seen true masters in this art before. In my opinion you haven't even heard of them."

Tang Wushuang said: "Although I'm not that well-informed, but I still know a few masters in that field."

Yang Zijiang said: "Who are those masters?"

Tang Wushuang said: "For instance the Lotus Fairy Xu Shuzhen of the Huashan School, Madame Hai Tang, master Hong Lian, the Seven Birds of Wulin, the Four Swallows of the South and the heroic robber of Liaodong province the Shadowless....."

Yang Zijiang scoffed: "Those are not experts."

Tang Wushuang said: "Of course they aren't your match, but still they are top martial artists of the realm."

Yang Zijiang sneered: "Top? You must be joking?"

Tang Wushuang now stayed quiet, he wasn't very pleased now.

Yang Zijiang poured a cup of wine before saying: "You have roamed the realm for some time now too. Have you heard of a place called EchoValley?"

Wang Yuluo and Tang Wushuang looked at each other and said: "Never heard of it before."

Yang Zijiang said: "I know that you haven't heard of that place before, if you did you wouldn't be sitting here that tranquil."

Tang Wushuang asked: "Are the people in the Echo valley well-versed in the art of levitation?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Well-versed? You could say they have reached the level of perfection. It is unbelievable. Do you know why it is called EchoValley? Because all the people there are like echoes you can hear them but you can't see them. If you have offended them, they won't kill you or

anything but they repeat your words as soon as you speak. If you stay quiet for three days, you won't hear them but as soon as you speak again they will repeat your words again."

Wang Yuluo looked pale now and smiled: "But just repeating your words. That isn't really too scary."

Yang Zijiang said: "But just repeating your words. That isn't really too scary."

Wang Yuluo was stunned but smiled: "My friend, don't joke around please."

Yang Zijiang said: "My friend, don't joke around please."

Wang Yuluo looked very nervous and stuttered: "My friend,you....you...."

Yang Zijiang said: "My friend,you....you...."

Wang Yuluo was sweating now and stayed quiet. Yang Zijiang smiled: "After three sentences you are becoming anxious and nervous now. Imagine what would happen after an entire month. Picture it, someone whom you cannot see following you and repeating your every word. Can you stand it?"

Wang Yuluo sighed deeply: "I think I will go insane."

Yang Zijiang said coldly: "That is their purpose, they won't kill you but you will eventually commit suicide because you can't stand it anymore. To my knowledge only one person has managed to put up with them for three months before killing himself."

Tang Wushuang exclaimed with fear: "Are they really that omnipotent?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Words cannot describe their level? You have to see it yourself."

Tang Wushuang said: "Let us be careful in the future, we don't want to offend them."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Rest assured they won't come after you, even if you trained for another 30 years."

Tang Wushuang grunted.

Yang Zijiang continued: "They are the true swallows, those people you mentioned are only worms compared to them."

Wang Yuluo asked: "How about you?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I'm a little sparrow."

The unknown man scoffed: "With your head gone, who is going to protect us?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I'm very capable of dealing with those who want your head. As for those who want my head.....They won't even want your head if you would present it on a silver plate."

The man angrily grunted and walked out of the room with heavy paces, Tang Wushuang and Wang Yuluo wanted to apologize and urge him to stay. But Yang Zijiang coldly said: "Let him go."

Wang Yuluo said: "Although he is a double-crossing fiend, but we shouldn't antagonize him now."

Yang Zijiang said: "Are you afraid he will betray us?"

Wang Yuluo said: "Chancellor Yu has made a deal with him, however he could betray his own family so why can't he turn on us."

Yang Zijiang said calmly: "In that case why won't you go after him and kill him."

Wang Yuluo looked confused for a minute but soon understood and said: "My friend, you deliberately drove him away."

Yang Zijiang poured another cup of wine and said: "I really don't mind killing but killing people in a nice place like this.....I'm not so keen on ruining my mood yet."

Wang Yuluo said earnestly: "Another four hours before dawn. That gives us plenty of time."

Yang Zijiang looked into his cup and said coldly: "If you haven't completed your task before dawn, I suggest you would find a good place to hide for the rest of your life."

Wang Yuluo looked afraid and quickly left.

Yang Zijiang suddenly looked melancholic, Tang Wushuang was too afraid to say anything now.

After some time Yang Zijiang asked: "Do you know why I want him to kill that fellow? And why I am sitting here drinking wine."

Tang Wushuang thought: If you give me a choice too I would rather drink wine too and relax here.

But Tang Wushuang just smiled apologetically: "I do not know."

Yang Zijiang said seriously: "It is because I haven't killed anyone before in my life, I really do not wish to kill."

Tang Wushuang was surprised and asked: "You....you really haven't killed before?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "You don't believe me?"

He now turned very serious and said: "It is because ever since I started to roam the realm I have not met anyone who is worthy being killed by me."

Tang Wushuang asked: "May I ask what kind of people is worthy of your attention?"

Yang Zijiang looked at him and said casually: "I will let you know when I see such a person."

Chapter 29 : A Deadly Pursuit In The Night

Yu Peiyu was trying to think of a plan, suddenly he saw Zhu Lei'Er moving swiftly to the carriage. She was agile like a cat and disappeared under the carriage in a flash. She held on to the bars beneath the carriage and rode off with the carriage.

When Yu Peiyu wanted to stop her but it was too late, she had already hid herself under the carriage.

Yu Peiyu shook his head and thought that this girl was really too bold for words.

Tang Wushuang shivered when he saw that Yang Zijiang looking at him like that.

Yang Zijiang got up and said softly to himself: "There is a Miss waiting for me in the room next door."

Tang Wushuang smiled nervously: "Does that cour...Miss know of our secrets?"

Yang Zijiang said casually: "I want her alive now, at least I don't want to see her dead at this moment. I can't say the same thing after a few days. So she doesn't know a thing and is sleeping."

Tang Wushuang smiled nervously: "In that case, you should not keep her waiting. I will....."

Yang Zijiang interrupted him: "Aren't you leaving?"

Tang Wushuang was confused and asked: "Leaving? Where to?"

Yang Zijiang answered: "The Tang Manor, of course. Tang Wushuang should go home now."

Tang Wushuang said with surprise: "Alone?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Of course alone, you're not a child anymore. Should I still hold you by your hand?"

Tang Wushuang stuttered: "But....but....."

Yang Zijiang asked: "Have you forgotten who you are?"

Tang Wushuang lowered his head and said: "I will leave now."

Yang Zijiang smiled happily: "Your children and pupils are waiting for you. And don't forget your mission."

Tang Wushuang said: "I wouldn't dream of forgetting."

Yang Zijiang said: "Very good! You will arrive at Tang Manor tomorrow night. It is best that you will accomplish your mission in the next three days. If you fail I suggest you would find a place to hide for the rest of your life too."

He turned around and walked to the door, he now turned around again and laughed: "You should also be careful about what you say. I might be listening right behind you."

Tang Wushuang swiftly left the brothel, Yu Peiyu, Zhu Lei'Er and Ji Lingfeng followed him out of the brothel. Of course using a different route.

Ji Lingfeng frowned and asked: "Tang Wushuang is our key to unravel the mystery of Yu Fanghe. Why won't you go after him?"

Yu Peiyu said: "The other man is also a key to Yu Fanghe's plans. I cannot allow Wang Yuluo to kill him."

Ji Lingfeng asked: "Who do you think he is?"

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "I really don't know and this isn't the time to speculate about his identity."

Ji Lingfeng looked pensive and said: "Whatever this Tang Wushuang's mission is, it must be extremely important."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Indeed, if he returns all the Tang disciples are at his disposal. He can give them the order to kill everyone Yu Fanghe wants."

Ji Lingfeng added: "Also the Tang secretive weaponry and poison are famous throughout the realm, we cannot allow Yu Fanghe to get those secrets."

Yu Peiyu said: "All these are very important, but I still feel that the unknown man of earlier is of greater importance now."

Ji Lingfeng said: "Very well! You two can track that Wang Yuluo and the unknown man down. I will stay here and observe that Yang Zijiang."

Before Ji Lingfeng left she smiled sweetly: "Don't forget our pact! Be careful about what you say too, I might be listening at your back you too."

Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu were walking through the streets, the streets were deserted and it was still night.

Zhu Lei'Er listened to the silence of the nights, she kept listening and thinking.

She thought about what happened between her and Yu Peiyu, she couldn't help getting emotional again.

The moonlight lit up her beautiful sad face.

Yu Peiyu walked very fast and he was looking about hoping to trace Wang Yuluo or that unknown man.

But he didn't look at Zhu Lei'Er.

She thought: He think I'm just in the way.

Suddenly she stopped and said: "I'm leaving too."

Yu Peiyu stopped too and asked with surprise: "Where are you going?"

Zhu Lei'Er bit her lip and smiled: "There are many places I can go, do not worry about me."

Everyone could see that her smile was extremely sad and tragic. Only a blind person cannot see that she is trying to be strong, Yu Peiyu wished he was blind at this very moment.

He wished he could say: Very well! You should leave. Although I'm very worried about you when you're alone roaming the realm. But staying with me is even more dangerous, I cannot even protect myself now let alone take care of you. Because of circumstances I cannot take you by my side, if you stay with me you will only become sadder and sadder. Furthermore I cannot stay with you for the rest of my life, can I?

But he couldn't say those heartless words to her, how can he say them.

He didn't say anything but gently held on to Zhu Lei'Er's hand and knew by this he would only complicate matters. But he couldn't care anymore, he cannot harm her feelings.

It is a cold and harsh world out there, he cannot imagine and will not allow this girl to suffer anymore.

Zhu Lei'Er wept softly. Out of happiness or out of sorrow, only she knows that.

Suddenly both heard a carriage coming their way and very quickly too. It is most uncommon that a carriage would ride this quickly especially this late. Unless there is an urgent matter the passengers have to attend to.

The carriage stopped near a drinking pond for the horses, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er quickly hid in an alley and could clearly observe the carriage.

It was an ordinary carriage, but Yu Peiyu knew that the passengers were not ordinary people. He looked around the corner, a woman put her head out of the window. Unfortunately Yu Peiyu couldn't see her face and only saw her long hair.

The driver of the carriage said: "Just in front is the Imperial Plaque bestowed by the emperor to widow Wang."

The woman said: "We will wait here. We're late, how come he isn't here yet."

She sounds very anxious and nervous, like a young girl planning on eloping with her lover.

There was another feminine voice saying: "Perhaps he got tired of waiting and left. We should look for him." This woman sounded younger than the other woman.

The other woman replied: "He knew we were waiting for him here. Why wouldn't he wait a bit longer."

The younger woman said: "Don't worry, I'm sure he will be here soon."

Just after she had finished, a shadow came sliding down a roof top. Yu Peiyu saw it was the unknown man. This man had already provided himself a getaway all along.

The man said with a hint of reproach: "Do you know that you're late?"

The woman said: "Because we're trying to make haste, one of our wheels broke. But....you.....Do you....realise how worried I was?"

The man said: "I noticed someone was following me, so I deliberately made an extra few rounds in town."

He quickly got into the carriage now.

The woman asked: "Is everything settled?"

The man said: "We will talk about this later, let us go."

The driver whipped the horses and they rode away.

Although Wang Yuluo only has one arm now, he is still a martial arts expert. This unknown man could get away from his pursuit, meaning he was also not an easy character. And the women in the carriage were not to be looked down upon either.

If they follow too closely they will easily be discovered, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er couldn't follow them on foot the entire time.

Yu Peiyu was trying to think of a plan, suddenly he saw Zhu Lei'Er moving swiftly to the carriage. She was agile like a cat and disappeared under the carriage in a flash. She held on to the bars beneath the carriage and rode off with the carriage.

When Yu Peiyu wanted to stop her but it was too late, she had already hid herself under the carriage.

Yu Peiyu shook his head and thought that this girl was really too bold for words.

He followed them but kept a distance, he wanted to find out who these people were first. He didn't want to engage into any unnecessary conflicts now.

After following for some time, he lost sight of the carriage but he could still hear it.

He was gradually weakening after following for hours, no matter how strong Yu Peiyu was he couldn't keep up with horses the entire time by foot.

He had no choice but to continue, he was very worried about Zhu Lei'Er now. She could be in danger now, also Yu Peiyu now realised he was very hungry too. He hadn't eaten properly for days now. He could hardly focus but he kept following the sound of the carriage, he didn't even know where he was or what time it was now.

Suddenly he noticed it was dawn and when he took a deep breath and realised he was back where he started. The carriage stopped near the same drinking pond.

They had been riding in a circle, the driver got off the carriage and went over to a stall for some noodles. Yu Peiyu was thinking what these people were up too, the driver sat down and was waiting for his noodles.

Yu Peiyu stood there waiting, but the aroma of the noodles kept calling him. For a hungry man it is very difficult to resist the temptation.

The driver's noodles finally arrived, the driver started to eat slowly. Yu Peiyu was very anxious and hoped he would hurry up. In a few moments the driver finished his noodles and still sat there, he even ordered another bowl of noodles.

Yu Peiyu was beginning to feel something was amiss, why would the man and two women stay in the carriage and not come out. Furthermore they were trying to get away from here as fast as possible hours ago. Why would they allow the driver to take his time to finish his breakfast.

Yu Peiyu was still hesitating on what to do, he finally made a decision and walked over to the driver. He asked: "Is it possible that I can ride with you?"

The driver smiled: "Of course! There is no one else in the carriage. Where do you want to go?"

EMPTY!!!!!!

Impossible, Yu Peiyu broke out in a sweat, he opened the door to the carriage and indeed no one was there. When he looked under the carriage Zhu Lei'Er was missing too.

He grabbed the driver and asked sternly: "Where are those passengers?"

Zhu Lei'Er attached herself to the bottom of the carriage, the dust and the bumping were almost unbearable.

She also had to breathe softly and had to focus to hear what those mysterious people were saying.

Fortunately those people started to talk and diverted her attention away from her suffering.

The woman sighed: "I have been thinking of you a lot, lately. Have you been thinking about me too?"

The man just coughed, the woman asked: "Haven't you been thinking of me?"

The other woman giggled: "Don't be afraid. I won't look or listen to your conversation, just pretend I'm asleep."

The man sighed deeply: "I....too....have been thinking of you. If not I wouldn't make a pact with them."

The woman asked him: "Do you regret your decision?"

The man said gently: "No, for you everything is worth it."

The woman stayed quiet, Zhu Lei'Er wondered what they were doing now.

She now knew that this man betrayed the Tang Clan because of this woman. But who is she?

After some time, Zhu Lei'Er heard the woman sigh, suddenly she pouted: "You said you were asleep, why are you spying on us."

The other girl giggled: "I was awoken by the two of you."

The woman said: "I think you're just suffering from lovesickness. That's why you can't sleep."

The other girl said: "I think the two of you are suffering from lovesickness, if this was a room....." She giggled.

The man coughed dryly: "Is everything arranged?"

The other girl said: "Don't worry. My sister has already arranged everything as soon as she received your letter. It is safer that we travel during the nights, up ahead we have rented a small farm for us to rest for the day. We will continue our journey tomorrow."

The two sisters seemed pleased, however the man still seemed a bit worried.

He asked: "Who did you ask to assist you?"

The elder sister said: "Someone we can trust."

The man said: "There are only few people in this world you can trust....."

The elder sister said: "We just told him to rent a farm for us, he doesn't know anything about you and our relationship.....After we've arrived there, we will silence him."

Zhu Lei'Er was shocked that these young women were that vicious.

The man asked: "Do you know where that farm is?"

The elder sister said: "After we're out of town we will meet up with him."

The man stayed quiet for a minute and said: "In that case tell the driver to ride around the town a few times."

The elder sister was surprised and asked: "Why?"

The man said: "We'll jump out of the carriage further ahead, we will leave town by foot. We will instruct the carriage to keep riding around in town, that way if someone is following us they will only follow the carriage."

The younger sister smiled: "You've become very careful."

The elder sister asked: "Has something changed?"

The man said: "No, they've agreed to our terms."

The elder sister said: "In that case everything has been settled. Why are you that afraid?"

The man sighed: "Because everything has been settled, we have to be extra careful."

The elder sister asked: "Why?"

The man said: "I think they want to silence us."

The elder sister said: "Who did you meet today?"

The man said: "A lackey of Yu Fanghe, Wang Yuluo and Tang.....that fake Tang Wushuang."

The younger sister scoffed: "If they're smart they won't even consider following us, but if they do they will not make it alive to see Yu Fanghe again."

The man said: "Those two men are hardly worth our attention, but there is someone who is ten times more formidable."

The younger sister asked: "Who is that?"

The man said: "He says his name is Yang Zijiang, I'm not sure whether that is true or false."

The younger sister asked: "Are his martial arts very high?"

The man sighed: "In my entire life I have never seen someone with such high martial arts. Around him my years of training are useless."

The sisters were shocked and surprised and stayed silent.

The man said: "Anyway you have to be careful now. Especially....."

He paused for a moment and said: "I have even more reservations."

The younger sister smiled: "Don't tell us those sad events anymore, otherwise my sister will start crying again."

She now turned to the driver and said loudly: "Old Wang! We will get out just further ahead. Don't stop the carriage and continue to ride circles around town. Do you understand?"

The driver said: "Yes, I understand."

The elder sister said: "If you reveal a word to anyone we will come back and kill you."

The driver said: "I wouldn't dare."

The elder sister smiled: "I know."

When Zhu Lei'Er knew that they were getting out any minute now, she was getting anxious.

If she would follow these three, Yu Peiyu would lose track of them. If she stayed behind these three would get away.

How would they know where they would hide?

She suddenly remembered a little box of rouge, it was a wedding gift from one of those courtesans of Apricot Pavillion.

She particularly liked this colour and put it away, she opened the box and used her fingers to write I'm following them, they've left town. with the rouge. She could only write

this much, her hands were also quite exhausted from clinging on to the bottom of the carriage.

The man said: "Let us get out here."

They opened the door and three figures leapt out, it seems that the movements of the sisters were faster than the man.

Zhu Lei'Er released her grip and she fell down hard on the ground, she almost fainted with pain. But she couldn't rest now and immediately got up and followed those three.

She also noticed that these three persons weren't her match when it comes to martial arts.

The driver didn't notice that they had an extra passenger. Zhu Lei'Er felt very proud and pleased about herself. She felt she was bold, cautious and ingenious. She even thought that people who have roamed the realm aren't as good as her.

But she doesn't know that the longer you roam the realm, the more careful you become. Because you will be afraid to die. People like Zhu Lei'Er won't have a very long life expectancy in Wulin, if they don't change.

The three have left the city far behind, and were moving to the remote outskirts.

Zhu Lei'Er thought: "Do you really think you have left your pursuers far behind."

She was feeling very proud and pleased again.

The movements of the two sisters were very graceful, and with their long dresses they looked like fairies moving in the night.

Unfortunately Zhu Lei'Er still couldn't see their faces.

They have reached a series of farmhouses, this place looked very idyllic. A pond with fishes and ducks, geese. And all sorts of the farm animals.

But Zhu Lei'Er felt that there was something missing in this picture, but she couldn't put her finger on it.

The younger sister said loudly: "This is the place." Zhu Lei'Er could clearly hear her words.

The man asked something, but Zhu Lei'Er couldn't hear it clearly. But it should be something like: "Are you certain?"

The younger sister said: "Haven't you notice that we have no roosters here? People working in the country always have chickens and roosters."

The elder sister smiled: "A rich young master like you won't know the goings-on of the country."

The man still looked surprised and puzzled, the elder sister said: "People around the country always raise chickens and roosters. But because roosters are animals we don't like, that's why we have ordered them to be killed."

Zhu Lei'Er now understood, what was missing. She softly said to herself: "So you and I are both users of poison."

Roosters are feared by users of poison, because roosters have the ability to kill and eat all sorts of poisonous insects.

Someone in the farmhouse was already alarmed by the barking of the dog and walked out. When he saw the two sisters, he respectfully said: "This lowly disciple welcomes the two elders."

One of the sisters waved her hand and the man walked back inside again, the dog was still barking. The man kicked the dog and the dog quickly went away.

Zhu Lei'Er swiftly moved to a big haystack, although the dog saw her but it didn't dare to bark anymore.

Zhu Lei'Er wondered what she should do now. Should she meet up with Yu Peiyu and tell them where these mysterious people are hiding? Or should she stay here and observe them?

She was still doubting about what to do, she accidentally brushed against the haystack softly.

Before she knew it, the two sisters stood next to her, now Zhu Lei'Er had finally seen how they looked like. They looked really pretty and sexy.

The younger sister smiled: "Little sister, aren't you afraid of the nippy morning air?"

Zhu Lei'Er blinked her eyes sweetly and said: "I live here too in the neighbourhood. And I didn't like to stay at home the entire time, so I came out for some fresh air."

The younger sister smiled: "In other words we're neighbours."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Yes, we are."

The younger sister smiled sweetly: "We just prepared a large pot of beef soup, please join us. It's better than standing here in the cold morning air."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Very well, I'm a bit hungry too. Beef soup, nice."

The elder sister stood there and smiled: "Very good, I was feeling sad that we don't know anyone around here. I'm so happy that we're able to be friends with a sweet and dear girl like you."

Both were not afraid of Zhu Lei'Er and thought a young girl like her is hardly a threat.

Both of them accompanied Zhu Lei'Er inside, Zhu Lei'Er wanted to see what kind of spectacular abilities these sisters had.

She thought: You will be in a surprise if you plan something against me.

When she entered that farmhouse, she noticed that it was very tidy and orderly decorated.

That man was not here anymore and also the man that came to greet them was also gone.

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit startled and thought: Have they killed that person?"

The younger sister asked: "What is your name? How old are you? How long have you been living here?"

Zhu Lei'Er gave them some answers and thought that she was quite a good liar.

However she doesn't know that most women are born liars, men on the other hand have to be trained properly if they want to lie well.

The elder sister and the younger sister went into the kitchen and brought out bowls, chopsticks, spoons and a pot of soup.

The elder sister poured a bowl for everyone, the younger sister said: "Little sister, eat up while it is hot."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I'm afraid to eat it."

The elder sister was a bit surprised and asked: "Why?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled innocently: "Poor people like me, hardly eat meat. So I'm afraid my stomach cannot take it."

The elder sister smiled: "Don't worry. I haven't put in any strong spices, so I'm very confident you won't have a stomach-ache."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "Won't I die after eating this soup?"

The elder sister was a bit taken by her remark and turned to her younger sister.

The younger sister smiled: "Why would you say a thing like that, little sister?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "In that case, I will drink it now. Thanks!"

Zhu Lei'Er started to drink the soup with delight, both sister looked pleased.

The younger sister gave the younger sister a meaningful look and asked: "Did you put in the special ingredient?"

The elder sister said: "How can I forget?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Delicious! Unfortunately I don't really like that special ingredient."

The two sisters looked startled, the younger sister said: "There is nothing special about that ingredient, it is just our own home-made spice."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Oh, alright. But why does my tongue feel funny now."

The elder sister laughed: "Perhaps I put in too much salt."

Zhu Lei'Er said softly: "Too much salt.....but that's not very good either."

Suddenly she fell down and didn't move anymore.

Both sisters cried: "Are you alright? What is wrong?"

When she saw that Zhu Lei'Er was unconscious they felt relieved.

The younger sister patted herself on the chest and smiled: "She gave me a scare, I thought she was an expert on using poison too."

The elder sister smiled: "If she was an expert she wouldn't drink an entire bowl of our soup."

The younger sister asked: "Did you put enough in it?"

The elder sister said: "Enough to even knock out an expert like granny Hu."

At this time the unknown man came in and when he saw Zhu Lei'Er, he asked: "Why did you kill her?"

The elder sister looked annoyed and said: "Why can't I kill her? Do you know her?"

Before the man could speak, the younger sister said: "Be careful about what you say, my sister is a jealous shrew."

The man sighed and smiled wryly: "Because I don't know her, that's why I want her alive."

The elder sister looked a bit angry and said: "Why? Do you want to become friendly with her?"

The man said anxiously and was nervous now: "I just want to question her about who sent her? And if she has any other accomplices. Don't you believe me?"

The elder sister looked happily now and said sweetly: "I was just joking with you, of course I trust you."

The younger sister pouted: "Why are you angered? If my sister doesn't love you she won't be jealous. If someone would be jealous because of me I will be very happy."

The man smiled: "I'm not angry, but I just....."

The elder sister smiled: "Don't worry, I didn't put anything lethal in the soup. She won't die, I will revive her in an instant."

Before she could say anything else, Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "No need for your help, I've revived myself."

She got up and immediately grabbed the man's hand and rendered him immobile. The man wanted to take her pulse at the time and before he knew what was going on he couldn't move anymore.

He was also amazed that this young woman's martial arts were that high.

Both sisters were surprised and looked at each other and thought why didn't it work on her?

The elder sister was even more amazed, she personally put the poison in the soup, it was enough to knock out ten horses. How could this young girl take it?

Zhu Lei'Er looked at them and smiled.

The younger sister composed herself and smiled: "Little sister, we didn't put any poison in your soup. We were just joking with you, if there was really poison in it you would be dead now."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Yes, I think so too."

The younger sister said: "Yes, that special ingredient was perhaps a bit too spicy for you. But although it was a home-

made recipe, it was composed by someone else and not by us.”

The younger sister ran into the kitchen and came back with a small bottle, she said: “This is the bottle with our home-made spice.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Really, there is no poison? I would like to taste it.”

The younger sister was surprised and happy, she was thinking how to trick this young girl to take in this bottle of poison.

The younger sister said: “If it is really poison, you can settle the score with me later on.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “But if it is poison, won’t I die? That way I can’t settle any score with you anymore.”

The younger sister was a bit shocked, and smiled: “This.....”

She didn’t know what to say, but Zhu Lei’Er smiled: “Throw me the bottle and I will taste it myself.”

Zhu Lei’Er caught the bottle with her right hand and drank the entire contents. But she still held on to the man’s hand.

The sisters looked pleased and thought this young woman was an idiot and felt relaxed now. They also felt sorry that they had that strange young woman drank the entire bottle. It was not easy to compose this poison.

Zhu Lei’Er praised: “Delicious, it is worth getting killed over.”

The younger sister sighed and said:
“One.....two.....three.....”

At the count of three she saw Zhu Lei’Er still standing. They had never seen this before, even martial arts experts couldn’t withstand this poison.

Zhu Lei’Er smiled: “Four.....five.....six.....seven.....”

The two sisters were shocked and afraid now.

Zhu Lei'Er continued: "Too bad there is so little, could you spare me a few bottles."

The sisters were too shocked, they had never encountered someone who could withstand their poison before.

The man saw that they were no match for this young woman so he sighed: "Please forgive me, for not recognizing an expert....."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "I'm not an expert, my stomach is just a bit better than normal people."

The elder sister stuttered: "I admit defeat, what.....what.....do you want with him?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Nothing I just want....." She didn't finish the sentence because she now saw that there is another person in this room. She didn't know when he came in.

He was sitting in a chair and was yawning. It was a young man who was quite handsome and very skinny. Although the sisters were shocked too to see this young man, but Zhu Lei'Er and the unknown man were even more shocked.

It was Yang Zijiang.

The unknown man hoped Yang Zijiang could save him, Yang Zijiang yawned a few more times before looking at them. He smiled.

The unknown man asked: "Brother Yang, do you recognize this Miss?"

Yang Zijiang said: "I think she is your friend, she is holding your hand very tightly."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Yes indeed, we're good friends, aren't we?" She put a bit of extra force in her hand, the man broke out in sweat because of the pain.

Yang Zijiang said softly: "No wonder you didn't want to stay at the Apricot Pavillion. It is because you have hidden so many beautiful young women here. How dare you keep them for yourself!"

The sisters looked angry, the man said: "I have told them that master Yang Zijiang is a famous young hero in the realm."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Since when did I become a famous young hero."

Zhu Lei'Er thought for a minute and said: "Master Yang must be hungry now, won't you have some soup?"

The sisters were hesitant, but the eldest sister saw Zhu Lei'Er's hand on the unknown man. She said: "I will get a bowl for you."

Yang Zijiang said: "No need! I'm not the son of the Lady Zhu of the Palace of Enchantment nor am I the pupil of Feng San. I cannot stand that soup."

Zhu Lei'Er was shocked that he would know her name and the sisters were surprised that this young woman's antecedents were that spectacular.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "How do you know me?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Miss, you're a very famous person now in Wulin. When I heard what you did in the Family Li Village I wanted to meet you at once. You and I are both rogues."

Zhu Lei'Er angrily reproached: "Mind your language! I'm not a rogue."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "All those men who disappeared in the Family Li Village must be dead because of you. With your young age you're that formidable after a few more years you will even be greater. That's why we are made for each other."

Zhu Lei'Er was angered by his arrogant words and behaviour, she wondered how to deal with this Yang Zijiang.

The younger sister smiled: "I think you're a bigger rogue than her."

Yang Zijiang clapped his hands and said: "Nobody in this room is a good person."

The younger sister said seductively: "I think we're a match for each other."

Yang Zijiang looked at her lecherously, the younger sister felt he was stripping her with his eyes. She wanted to poke out those eyes of him but she kept smiling.

The younger sister bit her lip and asked: "What do you want from me?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "You can be my second concubine, the more the merrier."

The younger sister took out her handkerchief and smiled: "You're so greedy."

She now looked confident because she thought this Yang Zijiang would fall down because the powder in the handkerchief.

Yang Zijiang laughed: "That handkerchief cannot seduce me, my heart is gone a long time ago."

The elder sister saw this wasn't going anywhere, she raised her hand and seven golden projectiles shot out of her sleeve towards Yang Zijiang.

Yang Zijiang gently brushed his hand and the seven projectiles flew back, the elder sister quickly dodge but unfortunately a few strings of her long hair were cut off. Seven golden blades were stuck into the wall.

Zhu Lei'Er and the two sisters were very worried now.

Yang Zijiang put his feet on the table and laughed: "What do you think of this technique? If you want to see more skills use all your rusty secretive weapons on me."

The younger sister sighed: "We give up."

The unknown man said sternly: "Kill me now! But leave these women alone."

Yang Zijiang sighed: "You're not a heartless man are you. Why do you think I'm here to kill you. I might even rescue you."

Zhu Lei'Er sneered: "Spare me your lies, Yang Zijiang."

Yang Zijiang yawned: "If I want to kill him, it will be extremely easy."

The younger sister asked sweetly: "Do you want to kill him or rescue him now?"

Yang Zijiang laughed: "The truth?"

The younger sister nodded.

Yang Zijiang said: "First I will save him from the hands of Miss Zhu, afterwards...."

The younger sister asked: "Afterwards what?"

Yang Zijiang said casually: "Afterwards I will kill him myself and have a good time with three beautiful girls here. After I grow tired of you I will sell you to a brothel."

The unknown man, the sisters and Zhu Lei'Er were furious when they heard Yang Zijiang's arrogant words.

Yang Zijiang continued: "I'm capable of doing almost everything."

He looked at Zhu Lei'Er and smiled: "Watch out! I'm going to save him from your hands."

Zhu Lei'Er released her grip of the man and said earnestly: "Go! I will deal with him."

The man was surprised and when he saw that Zhu Lei'Er swiftly flying up and storming towards Yang Zijiang with attacking stances, he wanted to leap through the window.

When Zhu Lei'Er reached where Yang Zijiang stood he was gone. The man was pushed back from the window and fell down. Yang Zijiang was sitting on the table yawning again.

He said: "Look I've saved him from Miss Zhu."

The elder sister stuttered: "You....you....what....."

Yang Zijiang said calmly: "Now I will kill him, don't worry he won't suffer."

He walked over to the man, the man couldn't move now.

The sisters took off their dresses revealing their underwear. They looked very sexy and their skin was smooth and white.

The elder sister shouted: "Move one more step and we will all die together."

Yang Zijiang sighed: "Do we really have to fight to the death."

The sisters said: "Yes." They took out two golden daggers and pointed towards their own chest.

Yang Zijiang frowned and asked: "Is this the infamous Blood Dissolving Dexterity?"

The younger sister said: "Since you know what this skill is, I suggest you would leave now."

Yang Zijiang said: "If I don't want you to die, you won't die."

Yang Zijiang flew up, the sisters gritted their teeth and wanted to use their daggers to stab their own chests.

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit stunned by this scene, she wasn't eager to see these two sisters die like that. She knew that when just a drop of blood of those sisters made contact with Yang Zijiang he would not survive.

Before Zhu Lei'Er could see what was going on, the sisters were in the arms of Yang Zijiang and the daggers on the floor.

He smiled to Zhu Lei'Er: "I am so sorry, I only have two arms."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "No matter, I will take them from you."

She knew that the unknown man was very important to Yu Peiyu, she had evaluated the situation and knew that Yang Zijiang couldn't block or avoid her full potential attack with two girls in his arms.

She leapt up and crashing down on Yang Zijiang and raised her palms. However Yang Zijiang gently pushed the two

sisters towards Zhu Lei'Er. Zhu Lei'Er had to redraw her palms and she felt someone blowing in her neck.

Yang Zijiang whispered in her ear: "Even if you studied with Feng San for another thirty years, you still wouldn't be my match. Stay with me and make me happy, I might teach you a thing or two."

Zhu Lei'Er felt weak all over and wanted to kick this annoying man to death, but she too couldn't move anymore.

Yang Zijiang placed the three young women in chairs, Zhu Lei'Er wanted to curse him but she and the sisters couldn't speak because their speech acupoint was sealed.

The sunlight shone on the beautiful naked bodies of the two sisters.

Yang Zijiang said seriously: "This is an important day for me. Today is the day that I will kill for the first time, I would like to see that the three Misses would be my witnesses and give me some pointers."

He bowed and said: "This is the first time I will kill someone, I really didn't want to kill a man like him. But I have no choice."

The sisters were crying, Yang Zijiang had use the golden dagger to remove the remaining garments of the sisters.

Yang Zijiang said: "If there are any friends of these beautiful ladies here I hope they will come now. It would be a shame that only three people would witness such an important day."

Zhu Lei'Er originally hoped Yu Peiyu would come soon, but now she hoped he would stay away. Because this Yang Zijiang is too frightening for words.

Yang Zijiang sighed softly: "People tell me that killing is very exciting, why can't I feel that."

He turned to the man and smiled: "If you're in pain, blink to me. I hate to see people in pain."

He was about to hack the unknown man, when a voice from outside said: "If you're in pain, blink to me. I hate to see people in pain."

Yang Zijiang's face changed and stormed to the window and shouted: "Who is there?"

The voice outside said: "Who is there?"

Yang Zijiang turned pale and said: "Are you.....?"

He didn't finish his question, he dashed through another window and was metres away in a flash. Everyone could hear him say: "Parrot! There are no grudges between you and me. I'm not to be trifled with either."

The two sisters were stunned, Zhu Lei'Er was shocked and surprised. This Parrot had helped her out two times, she was hoping to see his true appearances today. She looked at the window and hoped he would come through it.

Indeed, someone came through the window.

Chapter 30 : An Unforeseen Disaster

There were no visible wounds, how did he die.

Yu Peiyu stayed silent after awhile he asked Zhu Lei'Er: "Was he poisoned?"

Zhu Lei'Er examined the pot of tea on the table; she tasted a bit and shook her head.

Yu Peiyu asked: "There is no poison in the tea?"

Zhu Lei'Er shook her head and said: "None."

A figure came through the window, everyone was surprised to see this person. It was Yu Peiyu.

The sisters looked surprised and happy to see him; Yu Peiyu looked amazed too to find the sisters here.

He went over to Zhu Lei'Er and unsealed her acupoints and said: "Unseal their acupoints and follow me."

Zhu Lei'Er got up and immediately asked: "Do you know these two?"

Yu Peiyu picked up the unknown man and had already left the house, he didn't answer her question.

She bit her lip and looked at the sisters for a moment, Yu Peiyu said from outside: "Hurry up! Yang Zijiang could come back. I will be waiting for you in the abandoned barn up ahead."

Zhu Lei'Er picked up the clothes of the sisters and threw them at their feet. She looked at them bemused and unsealed their acupoints, she said: "Put your clothes on! I don't like my husband seeing naked women."

The sisters were stunned for a moment, the younger sister said with indignation: "Husband?"

Zhu Lei'Er looked at them and said: "Don't you recognize my husband?"

The elder sister nodded, the younger sister said: "We know young master Yu, but who is your husband?"

Zhu Lei'Er looked annoyed and said: "Young master Yu is my husband, my husband is young master Yu. Do you understand?"

The younger sister sneered: "Oh really! Congratulations. For a moment there I thought you were the daughter of young master Yu."

Zhu Lei'Er looked angered and said: "I knew it. You have an eye on my husband. But if I see you trying to seduce him I will kill you."

Yu Peiyu had reached the barn; he put the man down and unsealed his acupoints.

The man got up and bowed to Yu Peiyu, he said the following: "Thank you my friend for saving me. I take it you are befriended with the sisters."

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "I do know them and we are indeed befriended. But I wouldn't sell out my own family because of them."

The man backed a bit away from Yu Peiyu and stuttered: "What...what do you....you mean? I... I don't understand."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Tell me the truth, Tang Yue. Second young master Tang, please no more lies."

The man was trembling and looked very nervous.

Yu Peiyu sighed again: "I never guessed it would be you. I never guessed that you could betray your family and clan like that. But when I saw Miss Golden Blossom and Iron Blossom, I figured it out. You betrayed your father because he objected to your relationship with Miss Golden Blossom."

Yu Peiyu paused for a moment before continuing in a stern voice: "So you helped them to create a perfect imposter who

will approve of your relationship with Miss Golden Blossom. However by doing so you have not only betrayed your father but also the entire Tang Clan.”

Tang Yue backed to the wall and shouted: “My father is dead already. I did not kill him and by helping them I’m giving my brothers and sisters a father again. My brothers and sisters won’t have to deal with the tragedy of losing our father. I have done nothing wrong! I am right!”

Yu Peiyu angrily scolded: “So you rather have your brothers and sisters acknowledge an imposter to be their father. Don’t you even realise what he can do if returns? The entire Tang Clan will be ruined, the hard work of generations will be lost.”

Tang Yue looked like a defeated man and said: “Do you realise the pain I will be in, if I cannot see her. I know my crimes are unforgivable and I will rot in hell, but I don’t care.”

He looked at Yu Peiyu and continued: “Do you know what love means? Have you any idea what love can do to you? I suppose not. If you do understand you won’t blame me for my actions.”

Yu Peiyu looked sad now and smiled wryly: “I understand what you’re going through. I too know what love is and I am still in love with someone. I won’t blame you if you would elope with Miss Golden Blossom.”

Tang Yue smiled sadly: “Eloping? If things were that simple?”

Yu Peiyu said: “If the two of you truly love each other that deeply, you can find a remote place in the world and spend the rest of your life there. Both of you are people who can live without any luxuries of life.”

Tang Yue said: “Someone else could perhaps do that, but.....”

Yu Peiyu asked: “But what?”

Tang Yue continued: "Do you know how the Tang Clan deals with those who violate the family directives? They will hunt us down to the corners of the world. Besides the Heavenly Silkworm Sect is ten times more vicious than the Tang Clan."

Yu Peiyu said: "To my knowledge hierarch Sang doesn't oppose your relationship."

Tang Yue said sadly: "He doesn't object, because he wants me to wed his daughter officially. He knows that this will never happen. If this doesn't happen he won't allow us to be together."

Yu Peiyu said: "But you can run away."

Tang Yue said tragically: "Maybe we can escape the pursuit of my clan but we cannot escape from the Heavenly Silkworm Sect."

He said even more tragically: "If Golden Blossom betrays her father and sect, she will die horribly after seven months. After seven months her body will slowly rot away."

Yu Peiyu was worried and said, he quickly asked: "How is that?"

Tang Yue continued sadly: "Only hierarch Sang knows how to compose the antidote to prevent the caterpillars to come out from the Heavenly Silkworm Cocoon."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply: "So because of this you would rather sacrifice the lives of others including your family....."

Tang Yue said: "But I'm not a heartless man, but I will know how to deal with those conspirators too."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What do you mean?"

Tang Yue explained: "I can help them succeed, but I can also foil their plans. Sooner or later I will expose their crimes."

Yu Peiyu said with surprise: "Sooner or later? You are going to wait?"

Tang Yue said: "I will wait when I'm married with Golden Blossom."

Yu Peiyu said: "Do you realise the damage they can do in the meantime?"

Tang Yue said: "This....."

Yu Peiyu sternly said: "The secretive weaponry can fall in the hands of outsiders, all the Tang disciples would obey the commands of the imposter and become his slaves.

Furthermore have you thought of how many people can die at the hands of those conspirators, including your brothers and sisters. Your entire family can be destroyed before you can take actions against them."

Yu Peiyu added calmly: "Most important, can you live that long to expose them?"

Tang Yue was now a broken man, he was crying and said softly: "Am I wrong? Have I really made a grave mistake?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Are you still unaware of your mistakes?"

Tang Yue said: "That day my father ordered me to switch places with you. He told you to wear a mask and wear my clothes, he instructed my brother and I to contact Yu Fanghe....."

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes I know this already."

Tang Yue smiled wryly: "That day he ordered me to go and see Yu Fanghe, but he warned me not to pull anything on him. Or else he would make sure I will never see Golden Blossom again."

Yu Peiyu said grimly: "But you didn't listen to him, did you?"

Tang Yue said sadly: "If someone didn't offer me all sorts of advantages, I wouldn't betray my father. But Yu Fanghe told me that my father and my brother were dead. If this news would spread the entire Tang Clan would be in chaos, the entire Wulin would be thrown in chaos too. So he asked me to help him to create an imposter."

Yu Peiyu asked: "And you believed him?"

Tang Yue said: "I found his idea ridiculous too, but this way was the only solution. Furthermore there would be a great advantage for me."

Yu Peiyu said: "Except for agreeing your marriage with Miss Golden Blossom, I think he also promised you to be the new leader of the Tang Clan."

Tang Yue lowered his head and said: "In a fit of confusion I agreed, but afterwards I regretted my decision. I knew too that they would silence me."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply: "You're quite an intelligent man, but sometimes you are a bit too naive. This is what they call....."

He didn't finish his sentence: greed makes blind. He felt that this Tang Yue was very sad already, he didn't want to make him feel worse anymore.

Tang Yue continued: "I have kept contact with Golden Blossom via letters. When I arranged a meeting with Yu Fanghe, I told her to meet up with me after meeting with Yu Fanghe."

Yu Peiyu said: "A very clever move."

Tang Yue sighed: "That is why people say that life is similar to a game of go. I have made one major move, which I cannot correct....."

Before Tang Yue could finish, Golden Blossom stormed in and hugged Tang Yue, she sobbed: "You have done nothing wrong.....I was wrong....This is my fault."

Yu Peiyu was saddened by this scene, their love for each other was touching.

Although Tang Yue's actions were unforgiveable but understandable.

But their undying love for each other really touched Yu Peiyu.

Zhu Lei'Er quietly approached Yu Peiyu and asked: "Did you see my characters under the carriage?"

Yu Peiyu just nodded, initially he wanted to scold her for bold and rash actions. However when he saw her again, he couldn't scold her anymore.

Zhu Lei'Er just gently pulled her sleeve, looking like she was awaiting a scolding or a praise. But either way she would accept it, because both would come from her beloved Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu said gently: "If I didn't see your message, I wouldn't be here."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "When did you arrive? Did you see the Parrot?"

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Nobody can see the Parrot."

Zhu Lei'Er looked pensive for a minute and said sweetly: "If the Parrot wasn't here. Were you the one who scared away Yang Zijiang?"

Yu Peiyu smiled and nodded his head, he added softly: "That is why I am afraid he will return."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "That Yang Zijiang must think that they real Parrot is chasing him. He won't dare to open his mouth to speak, by the time he figured it out we will be long gone."

Iron Blossom stood some metres away from them, but she had her eyes on Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er the entire time. Their soft and intimate whispering pained Iron Blossom to her heart. She bit her lip and turned away from them, she felt that nobody cared for her anymore. The sobbing of Tang Yue and her sister were sad enough, but the intimate talking of Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er were even more depressing. She wished she was dead now.

Suddenly Yu Peiyu smiled to her: "Miss Iron Blossom, I haven't seen you for months you look slimmer than the last time."

If Yu Peiyu stayed silent, she wouldn't be this sad but now her tears almost poured out.

She thought: Yu Peiyu.....Yu Peiyu.....Do you know why I've become this slim? If you're really that concerned about me, how could you marry someone else?

She wanted to hug Yu Peiyu and cry her eyes out. She even wanted to bite him a few times.

She was confused; she didn't know whether to feel sad or happy to hear him talking to her again.

She doesn't know what to say now, and before she knew it Yu Peiyu turned his attention to Tang Yue again. It seemed that that sentence was just normal pleasantries. Her heart sank away to her feet, it was like her blood was sucked away from her body in one go. Yu Peiyu didn't understand the hearts of young women.

Yu Peiyu sighed to Tang Yue: "I'm not blaming you, you should decide what you should do now."

Tang Yue stayed silent for a moment, suddenly he said resolute: "I will go with you."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Where to?"

Tang Yue said: "Back to the Tang Manor and expose their crimes."

Yu Peiyu looked pleased and praised: "That is the true way of a hero. If you've made up your mind nothing can stop you. Furthermore if you have the tenacity you can solve any problem."

Zhu Lei'Er was happy too that Yu Peiyu had accomplished so many things today, she was happy that his mission for the truth has made incredible progress. Everyone was feeling happy, except Iron Blossom.

Tang Yue wiped away the dirt on his face and vowed to correct his mistakes and change his ways in his heart. Golden Blossom just stared at him with praise and tears in

her eyes, she felt proud that her man was able to take responsibility for his actions.

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "We have wasted enough time already; we should be on our way."

Yu Peiyu said: "Indeed, we can discuss the necessary on our way."

A voice from outside the barn said: "Indeed, we can discuss the necessary on our way."

Although everyone knew that this wasn't the real Parrot and had to be Yang Zijiang. But in their eyes Yang Zijiang was equally scary as the Parrot.

Zhu Lei'Er turned pale and shouted: "Yang Zijiang, come out like a man! Stop playing tricks!"

Golden Blossom tightly held on to Tang Yue's hand and scoffed: "You ran away like a coward earlier. How dare you to come back again, have you no shame!"

Yu Peiyu said loudly: "Yang Zijiang, since you're here there is no need to hide yourself anymore."

When Zhu Lei'Er and Golden Blossom there was no reply but as soon as Yu Peiyu spoke the voice repeated: "Yang Zijiang, since you're here there is no need to hide yourself anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er gritted her teeth and shouted: "Yang Zijiang, it could be that other people fear you. But Yu Peiyu doesn't fear the likes of you!"

Golden Blossom shouted too: "Are you a man or not! Come out!"

They few of them continued to scold, curse but in vain. However when Yu Peiyu opened his mouth the voice would repeat the words of Yu Peiyu.

The few of them exchanged looks and nodded, they all stormed out the barn together.

When outside there wasn't even a shadow of another person.

Yu Peiyu said sternly: "If you're insulted that I've tricked you earlier, come out now. I will fight you to the death."

The voice repeated: "If you're insulted that I've tricked you earlier, come out now. I will fight you to the death."

This time the voice came from behind the barn, when they rushed over there nobody was there again.

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly said to Yu Peiyu: "You stay here and the rest of us will each take a different position."

Yu Peiyu nodded and waited when they were in position and shouted: "Yang Zijiang, come out!"

The voice repeated: "Yang Zijiang, come out!"

The voice came from the east, Yu Peiyu, Zhu Lei'Er, Golden Blossom and Iron Blossom all rushed over to Tang Yue's position.

They saw Tang Yue looking frantically; he was looking all around him. Zhu Lei'Er asked Yu Peiyu: "Did you hear where that voice was coming from?"

Yu Peiyu nodded; Golden Blossom held Tang Yue's hand and asked Tang Yue: "Did you see anyone?"

Tang Yue looked extremely pale now and said trembling: "The voice came from behind me but when I turned around the voice shifted again and my back was faced to him again. When I turned for another time he was gone and the voice too."

Golden Blossom said to Tang Yue: "We will stay together this time, back to back."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "But that way there will be an opening he can take advantage of."

They all looked together and were stunned. After some time Zhu Lei'Er said: "I don't think it is Yang Zijiang that is playing tricks with us."

Tang Yue asked: "Why do you say that?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Yang Zijiang has orders to take your life; he could have taken your life when you faced him with your back. So therefore I conclude this voice isn't Yang Zijiang."

Tang Yue shivered and asked with a trembling voice: "Who.....who do you think it is?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If it isn't Yang Zijiang it must be the real Parrot....."

When she said this she herself was stunned and shocked, she unintentionally backed closer to Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu stayed silent for some time and said earnestly: "No matter what, our plans stay the same. I don't care who he is, if he doesn't have the courage to face me. I am not afraid of him, just because he's repeating my words."

Although he said this to assure Zhu Lei'Er and the others, he was very worried now in his heart.

The voice repeated his words again now.

As soon as Yu Peiyu said something the voice would repeat it.

Everyone was feeling worried and scared; this mysterious martial arts expert was following them and spying on them. The mere thought was enough to make them gloomy.

Whenever Yu Peiyu spoke the voice would repeat it, it was unbearable. And any lesser man would have cracked already.

Near dusk they reached a rather big town, they found the best inn and decided to lodge and eat there.

When they entered the inn, they saw it was rather crowded. There was no sign of Yang Zijiang. But could one of these customers be the infamous Parrot?

Yu Peiyu now loudly said: "Listen, I'm talking again. Repeat my words."

His voice carried very far and everyone heard him. The customers of the inn and the waiters all looked up and

stared at him. They all thought why he talked that loudly and his words made no sense at all. Everyone stayed quiet, and nobody repeated his words. The customers stared at Yu Peiyu for a moment now and thought this man was mad. They ignored him and continued to eat and talk again.

But Yu Peiyu and his friends were very happy for him and laughed happily and loudly now.

The customers and waiters looked up again and wondered how this group of madmen had money to eat and lodge here.

Zhu Lei'Er almost cheered with happiness; she used a lot effort to control her emotions before saying: "The Parrot is gone now, isn't he? Can you hear it too?"

Golden Blossom and Tang Yue said simultaneously: "You're right, he is gone. We can hear it too."

Some of the waiters and customers looked at them again and wondered: What are they talking about? There wasn't any noise earlier? These people are madder than I thought."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "It seems it really was the Parrot, Yang Zijiang wouldn't leave us alone like that."

Yu Peiyu was still a bit restless and tried one more time, he said loudly: "If he really wants to harass me, why would he leave so soon."

Fortunately there wasn't a voice to repeat him, the imitator was really gone now.

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Perhaps he didn't really want to harass you, he just wanted to teach you a lesson for using his fame. So he played a little joke on you too."

Golden Blossom smiled too: "I agree, now that the joke is over he has gone weary of you."

This dinner was a very cosy, there was a lot of talking. However not on the side of Yu Peiyu and Tang Yue. With three women in the company men can hardly talk.

But of the three women, the least talkative was Iron Blossom. She kept looking and observing Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er. She wondered whether they were really married and whether they really were husband and wife.

After the dinner she had her answer.

Yu Peiyu ordered five rooms in total he said: "Well, we need to rest properly now. Furthermore we need the energy to face the possible troubles ahead."

He turned to Tang Yue and laughed: "You have neighbouring rooms and there is a door linking to both rooms. Although I asked for five rooms but I'm not a conservative man."

Yu Peiyu was feeling quite pleased and even joked a bit now.

Golden Blossom looked at Tang Yue and Tang Yue looked at her. When their eyes met they both blushed, it seems they had never been intimate with each other before.

Golden Blossom blushed and said timidly: "We need all the rest we need, we won't make use of that door."

It would have been best if she kept quiet, but now everyone started to laugh loudly including Tang Yue.

Golden Blossom blushed even more and pouted to Tang Yue: "Laugh all you want now. I will lock that door and see if you can laugh tonight."

Before she could finish, she herself started to laugh. She quickly entered her room and closed the door.

Yu Peiyu patted on Tang Yue's shoulder and joked: "We have a long day ahead of us, that day will come very soon."

Both he and Tang Yue entered their own rooms, they all felt relaxed now. Their sorrow and troubles were not so threatening anymore at this moment.

However Iron Blossom was the happiest of them all.

She smiled to Zhu Lei'Er: "My sister and my brother-in-law aren't officially married yet, so that's why they sleep in

different rooms. But why are you sleeping in different rooms too?"

Zhu Lei'Er was looking at Yu Peiyu's closed door and felt quite melancholic as it is.

But hearing the words of Iron Blossom was like pouring oil on fire.

She angrily said: "That is a matter between him and me. It is not your concern."

She walked into her room and heavily closed the door.

Iron Blossom looked at Yu Peiyu's door too for a moment and looked through the window to stare at the moon. She suddenly sighed deeply: "It is a long night.....perhaps too long....."

There was indeed an extra door in Golden Blossom's room. When she entered her room, she immediately fell down on the bed. She wanted to sleep but couldn't fall asleep and kept tossing and turning.

In the end she sat up and looked at the door, it was quiet on the other side.

Is he asleep now? What is he doing? Those were the thoughts of Golden Blossom.

She kept waiting and waiting, she was confident that Tang Yue would look for her. But he didn't come, she thought: If you're not coming here, I will look for you myself.

She got off her bed and gently walked to the door, because she was a girl from Yunnan she was accustomed not to wear shoes.

And the inn was very clean.

Suddenly she heard a soft knock on the door; she immediately went back to her bed.

She laughed softly: "I knew you couldn't resist the temptation, but...but.....there is time for that later on."

It remained silent on the other side, was Tang Yue angry now. Golden Blossom said gently: "It is not that I don't want to let you over, but they might hear us and laugh at us tomorrow."

But there was still no sound on the other side; the last words of Golden Blossom would at least trigger a response. Golden Blossom asked: "Are you angry with me?"

It was still quiet on the other side, after some time Golden Blossom became annoyed and said: "Are you dead or something? Answer me!"

Again there was not a sound coming from the other side. She now realised something was amiss and stormed into Tang Yue's room.

Iron Blossom was lying in her bed too and she was smiling. All her worries were over now. Because Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu were sleeping in separate rooms.

Although she was not sleeping with him either, but at least nobody else was sleeping with him.

That thought made her very happy and secure again, Yu Peiyu was still available.

She suddenly felt that life and the psyche of women was very strange downright funny even.

She could also overhear the words of Golden Blossom, she secretly laughed at her sister.

After some time she heard the door opening of Golden Blossom's door to Tang Yue's room. She blushed because she could imagine how things would end.

She smiled and felt happy for her sister.

However she heard her sister shriek very loudly. That didn't sound like the sound of two lovers meeting in the night. She got up at once and rushed over to see what was wrong.

Zhu Lei'Er was lying in her bed and was sobbing. She was crying because Yu Peiyu humiliated her in front of Iron Blossom. Not because he didn't want to sleep with her.

She didn't even mind if she would be sleeping on the floor, she wouldn't even mind if she crawled out through the window and went back to her own room later on.

She just wanted that Iron Blossom could see her and Yu Peiyu enter the same room together.

She couldn't hear the words of Golden Blossom, but she could hear the shriek over Golden Blossom clearly.

The shriek sounded awfully eerie; when she opened her door she saw that Yu Peiyu and Iron Blossom had opened their doors at the same time.

What happened in Tang Yue's room?

They heard Golden Blossom crying loudly now and when they looked inside Tang Yue's room.....

They saw Tang Yue lying on the floor; his normal handsome young face looked awful now. His hands made a fist, his face was contracted together.

The other lodgers of the inn were also aroused by the noise; they all came out to have a look.

Yu Peiyu walked in and closed the door; he and the rest were not in the mood for gawkers.

Iron Blossom was stroking the hair of her sister and consoling her softly. But soon she broke out in tears too and didn't know how to console her sister anymore.

Yu Peiyu was angry, sad and upset, he was trembling now. Zhu Lei'Er walked over to him and asked softly: "How did he die?"

He shook his head and didn't answer; he picked up the body of Tang Yue and placed him on the bed.

There were no visible wounds, how did he die.

Yu Peiyu stayed silent after awhile he asked Zhu Lei'Er: "Was he poisoned?"

Zhu Lei'Er examined the pot of tea on the table; she tasted a bit and shook her head.

Yu Peiyu asked: "There is no poison in the tea?"

Zhu Lei'Er shook her head and said: "None."

Yu Peiyu looked at Tang Yue's body and noticed something, it seemed he was clutching to something in his hand.

He wanted to see what that was; Zhu Lei'Er stopped him and said: "Let me have a look."

She opened the hand of Tang Yue and saw blood dripping from his palm, the blood was black.

She pulled out a small metallic object shaped like a flower, with tiny sharp spikes.

Zhu Lei'Er said earnestly: "What a lethal poison! I wonder whether I could handle this poison myself."

Yu Peiyu also looked very serious and said: "This is one of the Tang secretive weapons, the spiked bludgeon. It is extremely lethal and the victim will practically die instantly."

Zhu Lei'Er said with surprise: "Tang secretive weapon? So do you mean he committed suicide?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Perhaps three months ago he would but now....."

He didn't finish his sentence he looked sadly at the weeping Golden Blossom.

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "It must be that Yang Zijiang."

The night slowly passed, it was dawn now. Golden Blossom gradually came by her senses. She paid the proprietor a lot of silver to buy a coffin and order the best undertakers in the town. She personally supervised every detail when the undertakers came; Yu Peiyu, Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom sat down and saw her walking about being busy.

Zhu Lei'Er said sadly: "Let her be. It will give her some distraction."

Yu Peiyu said sadly: "It won't be easy to recover from this tragedy."

All of a sudden Iron Blossom asked them: "Do you think Yang Zijiang is really the killer?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If it isn't him who could it be."

Iron Blossom said: "If it was him he could have killed my brother-in-law at the barn."

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly: "Maybe he thought we couldn't escape from him anyway. So he deliberately played with us and waited for a good chance to surprise and shock us. He has his revenge now."

Iron Blossom stayed quiet and said softly to herself: "Yes, he is that kind of man."

She looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Perhaps he hasn't left at all and is spying on us this very moment."

Yu Peiyu nodded.

Iron Blossom looked in front of her and said slowly: "He won't stop at one; he will kill us all one by one."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at a willow tree; she shivered when she heard the words of Iron Blossom.

After some time Yu Peiyu smiled: "Killing us all, that won't be that easy."

They noticed that Golden Blossom wasn't in the yard of the inn anymore.

A strong wind was blowing now; everyone shivered a bit and felt it was a bad omen. It seemed like Yang Zijiang was spying on them.

Zhu Lei'Er asked Iron Blossom: "Where is your sister? Will she commit....."

Yu Peiyu quickly interrupted her: "She is a very strong woman; both she and Miss Iron Blossom are not those who seek death."

He didn't want to hear the word suicide.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If she was feeling sad and heart-broken, I would feel secure. However she was looking so determined and calm earlier, she couldn't have put away her sadness that easily."

Iron Blossom immediately got up and started to look for her sister, Zhu Lei'Er looked sad and sighed: "With Tang Yue dead, I am afraid that Golden Blossom won't want to live either....."

Yu Peiyu suddenly noticed that Zhu Lei'Er has become more mature and adult over these two days.

Zhu Lei'Er noticed Yu Peiyu looking at her and she seemed to understand what he was thinking. She lowered her head and said: "Men need more time to mature, but women can mature very quickly sometimes even overday."

Yu Peiyu stayed quiet and didn't know what to say.

Suddenly he remembered something he heard about: Girls become women after they get married.

He wasn't sure if Zhu Lei'Er meant that and he was too afraid to ask. He didn't want to talk about this matter at least not now.

Fortunately Iron Blossom came back with Golden Blossom, Golden Blossom wore a beautiful dress with bright colours. Yu Peiyu thought it was strange that she would something like that now, shouldn't she be wearing mourning clothes instead.

Golden Blossom sat down in front of Yu Peiyu and asked: "What do you think of this dress?"

Yu Peiyu was dumbfounded by this question and smiled awkwardly: "Very nice."

Golden Blossom smiled: "My mother told me once if a person is tired and exhausted, you should freshen up and wear new clothes. You will feel perky again."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Do you feel better now?"

Golden Blossom didn't hear that question; she gently touched the embroidered flower on her dress. She turned to Yu Peiyu and smiled: "I embroidered this flower myself, even little Yue hasn't seen this dress before. You're the first man who sees this dress."

Her voice sounded very gentle. Yu Peiyu didn't know how to react.

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit taken by her words too and thought: Why is she saying these words to Yu Peiyu, Tang Yue died only less than half a day ago. Is she looking for a replacement now?

Zhu Lei'Er knew that this possibility was not big but she couldn't stop herself from thinking about that.

Golden Blossom said: "I know that everyone is very tired, I have ordered the kitchen to prepare a few of their famous dishes. Let us rest and drink some wine."

Her fiancé just died, how can she drink?

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Can you really eat and drink now?"

Golden Blossom laughed faintly: "He is dead now, even if we cried our eyes out he cannot be brought back. We should take good care of ourselves if not he won't die peacefully."

These words that others should console her, but she was using them to console them.

Zhu Lei'Er was dumbfounded again.

In awhile the waiters brought in the dishes and wine, she poured a cup and raised her cup and said: "Let us drink."

Yu Peiyu was a bit hesitant; Zhu Lei'Er was looking at Yu Peiyu and saw him drinking a cup too.

Golden Blossom said: "Miss Zhu....."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "I do not have the mood to drink, perhaps you do."

Golden Blossom smiled: "Anyway I have to drink this cup, Miss Zhu....."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Anyway I won't drink this cup."

Golden Blossom looked into her cup, the red son shone on the wine. The wine looked red, like blood.

Her smile was gone now and said recited: "I urge him to drink another cup, in the west there are no friends anymore....."

She drank the wine and laughed: "Who says that I do not have friends anymore, at least I have little Yue."

Iron Blossom raised her cup and wanted to drink too, but she dropped her cup and shrieked: "Eldest sister....."

Golden Blossom said gently: "I am fine, I am very happy. I have never been happier before. Because in a few moments I will be together with little Yue forever.....Nobody can separate us again."

Zhu Lei'Er quickly took the cup from Golden Blossom's hand and wanted to taste to see what poison she used.

Yu Peiyu also stood up with surprise; Golden Blossom gently held Zhu Lei'Er's hand and said: "You don't have to taste it; there is no poison in my cup."

Zhu Lei'Er said sadly: "But.....you....."

Golden Blossom said gently: "The poison was in my heart, when little Yue died I had already....."

She couldn't finish her words. At least she didn't suffer, staying alive and living on was suffering in her eyes.

It was dusk, the wind was howling and there were soft cries of weeping. Yu Peiyu, Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom looked at the new graves.

Zhu Lei'Er kept blaming herself and sobbed: "If only I had drunk that wine too. Why didn't I drink the wine?....."

The night set in now, Zhu Lei'Er continued to sob: "She was planning on dying all along, why didn't I act? Why didn't I stop her?"

Yu Peiyu looked at the two graves and thought why these loving couple had to die? Why did so many loving couples have to die?

He wiped away his tears and said: "Let us go."

Zhu Lei'Er raised her head and cried: "Let us go? Is that the only thing you can say now?"

Yu Peiyu said tragically: "What can I say? What else is there that I can say?"

Iron Blossom suddenly said: "At least we shouldn't stay here and cry."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Why? Why?"

Iron Blossom looked around her like there could be spies all around them. She said: "If he sees us this sad, he will be very happy. Why will we allow him to be happy? I will let my tears flow somewhere else."

Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu knew who [he] was, Zhu Lei'Er stood up and looked around too, she thought: Could the eyes of him really be looking at us and is he laughing now?

Yu Peiyu wiped away the tears on the tombstones and said: "Let us go now."

Zhu Lei'Er nodded and said: "Let us go."

The three of them moved in the darkness, Yu Peiyu felt very sad. Tang Yue died, he didn't deserve to die, he was about to correct his mistakes.

Furthermore with him dead, Yu Peiyu's quest was set back too.

The disappointment was really big for Yu Peiyu.

Zhu Lei'Er walked beside him, although she understood what he was thinking she didn't interrupt his thoughts.

After for walking for some time Yu Peiyu didn't speak, all of a sudden he said loudly: "Why should I give up! I lost this round, but I won't give up not while I am still breathing."

Although he was talking to himself, Zhu Lei'Er looked at him full of praise and love. She said gently: "Exactly as long as we are still standing, we will be able to topple him."

Yu Peiyu looked up and said: "Indeed that day will come. Although brother Tang Yue has died we still have to go to Tang Manor. We cannot allow a mere old stable-boy become the leader of the Tang Clan."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled again when she heard the words [a mere old stable-boy].

She smiled and said: "We will degrade him again to the stable-boy he is. Miss Iron Blossom, what do you.....?"

She turned around and saw that Iron Blossom was gone.

Iron Blossom was walking behind them. She felt like a third wheel in the company of Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er.

Both Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu started to look in the vicinity and yelled: "IRON BLOSSOM, WHERE ARE YOU! COME OUT! CAN YOU HEAR US! PLEASE ANSWER US!"

Suddenly Yu Peiyu rushed over to Zhu Lei'Er's position and held Zhu Lei'Er's hand. He was afraid that she will disappear into nothingness too."

The moon lit up a brook near them; Yu Peiyu started to follow the stream and hoped to spot Iron Blossom near it.

Zhu Lei'Er asked softly: "Do you think she would have left us without telling."

Yu Peiyu said: "Will she really leave us like that?"

Zhu Lei'Er bit her lip and said: "Do you think that Yang Zi...zijiang seized her?"

Suddenly Yu Peiyu saw something in the bushes; it was a shoe of Iron Blossom.

When Iron Blossom was around Zhu Lei'Er hoped she would go away, the look Iron Blossom gave Yu Peiyu always got on her nerves. But now she wished she was back.

She started to sob when she realised that Iron Blossom might be gone forever.

She dug a little hole and buried the shoe and said: "Perhaps she really did leave on her own and wasn't captured or attacked by Yang Zijiang."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply and said in the end: "Maybe."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If she was attacked, she would have at least put up a struggle. She wouldn't be overwhelmed in one go, she is strong enough to ward off a few stances."

Yu Peiyu nodded in agreement.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Furthermore if she is dead, there is bound to be a body. But there isn't one so it is safe to presume that she is still alive now....."

She suddenly broke out in tears and said: "Why am I lying? She is probably dead now and it must be that Yang Zijiang that is behind this. He won't allow us to make it alive to the Tang Manor."

Yu Peiyu let her cry and said after some time: "Let us move on."

Zhu Lei'Er composed herself again and said: "Yes, let us move on. Let us find him."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "We're not looking for him."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What are we going to do now?"

Yu Peiyu said: "We will await his arrival."

Zhu Lei'Er bit her lip and sighed: "You're right. He is bound to look for us, but are we going to stay here and wait for him?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Our goal is still the same; we go to the Tang Manor and stop the imposter."

He looked very determined and resolute; nothing and nobody in this world could change his mind about his plan.

His stern and executive tone made an impact on Zhu Lei'Er too, she said firmly: "We will go to Tang Manor, no matter what."

She said loudly, she wasn't afraid that Yang Zijiang would hear her. In fact she was hoping he would hear their determination.

Yu Peiyu patted her on the shoulder as a meaning to praise her.

He tightly held on to her hand and was afraid the mysterious black oblivion would swallow her too like it did to Iron Blossom.

They were extra careful now and it made their journey even more difficult. With extreme difficulty they reached the next town, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er went to an inn.

Yu Peiyu told her: "We will rest in this town and travel to Tang Manor tomorrow morning."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him gently and sighed: "You really need to rest too."

The proprietor of the inn asked how many rooms Yu Peiyu wanted.

Yu Peiyu looked at Zhu Lei'Er and said to the proprietor: "Just one room will do."

Zhu Lei'Er's heart skipped a beat; the proprietor was disappointed because the business of his inn wasn't doing too well. And he also thought these two didn't really look like husband and wife, they were acting too formal.

When they entered the room, Zhu Lei'Er's heart was beating very fast.

Yu Peiyu locked the door and secured the windows; he now turned to Zhu Lei'Er and smiled gently: "Sleep now."

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and asked: "How about you?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I will put two chairs together and sleep on it."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You should sleep on the bed because you need a good rest."

Yu Peiyu looked at her; he noticed she looked very tired and pale.

His affection for her grew when he saw her like that.

He thought: "Yang Zijiang could appear at any moment, why should I even bother with that damn etiquette. I will only make her feel worse; I want her to sleep properly. Why can't we share a bed?"

Zhu Lei'Er was making up the bed for Yu Peiyu and smiled with difficulty: "I can sleep in a chair, I'm used to that. When I took care of my third uncle I did the same."

Yu Peiyu said with soft and gentle: "We will share the bed, it is a big bed. And I am not fat."

Zhu Lei'Er was just holding a pillow at this moment and when she heard his words she dropped the pillow immediately.

She wanted to look at Yu Peiyu now but was afraid to do so, she just stuttered: "Aren't you.....you....afraid....."

Yu Peiyu didn't let her finish and interrupted: "Afraid of what? Don't tell me that you hit people when you're asleep?"

Zhu Lei'Er blushed and giggled: "No I don't hit people in my sleep, but I tend to occasionally kick people in my sleep. You might end up sleeping on the floor after all."

It wasn't a very big bed; the proprietor had really no intentions that their guests would share beds even if they were husband and wife.

Yu Peiyu was really exhausted and he was asleep very soon. Zhu Lei'Er was very anxious and didn't even dare to look at Yu Peiyu. She didn't even dare to touch his blanket.

One day ago she wished she could share a room with Yu Peiyu but now they were sharing a room she was scared out of her wits.

She backed to the wall and tightly held on to her blanket, her heart was beating faster and faster.

If Yu Peiyu would reach out to her, what will she do?

Zhu Lei'Er was too afraid to think about that but she couldn't resist the temptation to think about what would happen.

She felt very warm but didn't dare to put her head out.

Fortunately Yu Peiyu was asleep and she could put her head out for some air, but when he suddenly turned again she quickly retreated back under her blanket.

But in her heart she was filled with happiness because Yu Peiyu was sleeping next to her. She wanted to scream on the rooftops and let everyone know what happened here. But if people would come now and enter their room she would hide herself under her blanket again.

The happiness of a young girl.....the happiness and innocence of a young girl.

Volume 7 - Secrets Abound

Chapter 31 : As Unpredictable As The Weather

He can also make up that this person must be a respected senior in the Tang family. Zhu Lei'Er whispered: "We are too late, he has already killed someone. Who knows how many people have died because their plots? It is strange that he would kill people in the Tang Clan first."

Yu Peiyu was pretending to be asleep, after a long time when he noticed that Zhu Lei'Er was really asleep he opened his eyes.

Zhu Lei'Er was asleep, she was really tired a lot of happened in these days. He thought she was still young and still very innocent, when he saw the sweet, tranquil and beautiful face of Zhu Lei'Er he smiled.

To be honest although Yu Peiyu was a true gentleman, he was still a healthy young man. Sleeping next to him was a beautiful young girl who was madly in love with him, if he said he wouldn't feel anything right now he would be lying.

Furthermore if he really would embrace her, he knew she wouldn't resist him. Yu Peiyu gently caressed her hair, suddenly he felt warm. But then he remembered Lin Daiyu, he remembered that night with Lin Daiyu.

Even if Yu Peiyu didn't tell Lin Daiyu who he really was, but she already knew.

Her love for Yu Peiyu told her that he was her fiancé.

When she stabbed him, her heart was also filled with sorrow and pain. Yu Peiyu removed his hand of Zhu Lei'Er's hair.

The night slowly passed, fortunately Yang Zijiang made no appearance. Zhu Lei'Er woke up first and saw she was sleeping next to Yu Peiyu.

She realised it was her first night with a man, she was happy and nervous.

Albeit nothing happened but she felt she was no longer a girl she was now a woman.

She couldn't help herself from giggling.

The sun shone into the room now, she carefully looked at Yu Peiyu. He was still asleep, he looked like an innocent boy too.

Zhu Lei'Er also gently caressed his face and said gently: "If this was our home, it would be perfect. I will cook congee for you every morning and you will have to eat at least eight bowls before leaving the table."

Yu Peiyu laughed now: "Eight bowls only, I can eat at least ten bowls at this moment."

Zhu Lei'Er was scared out of her wits and quickly pulled away her hand.

She pouted: "I thought you were gentleman but you're a.....I.....I....am so embar....."

She didn't know what to say.

Yu Peiyu looked at her and was dazzled, her hair was loose and her cheeks were reddish. She looked absolutely gorgeous now, he wondered he should feel happy or sad.

He got up and said softly: "Strange, why hasn't Yang Zijiang made an appearance yet."

Zhu Lei'Er turned pale when she heard the name Yang Zijiang and said with fear: "Perhaps he is afraid of us?"

Yu Peiyu stayed quiet, Zhu Lei'Er said: "What other reason could there be?"

Yu Peiyu looked pensive and sighed: "I really don't know, but I'm sure he isn't afraid of us."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "Maybe he is dead, or maybe he got blind. Or even better he has caught leprosy. Anyway he

isn't here and we shouldn't waste our time thinking about him."

Yu Peiyu said with a smile: "The only thing I am thinking about is a big bowl of noodles."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "And two fried dough sticks would be nice too."

She was feeling perky and happy today and after breakfast they went on their way. Around noon they had reached the territory of the Tang Clan.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "How much further is it?"

Yu Peiyu said: "About one hour walk from here."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed deeply: "We're finally here."

Yu Peiyu sighed too: "That imposter must have arrived yesterday; he could have done a lot these two days."

Zhu Lei'Er said gently: "Don't worry, he only arrived two days earlier than us. Besides he has to deal with a lot of formalities, I don't think he has time to do anything evil at the moment."

Yu Peiyu said: "I hope so too, but I'm afraid....."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What are you afraid of?"

Yu Peiyu said earnestly: "I am afraid that the people from the Tang Clan won't believe my story. Imagine some stranger walks up to you and tells you, your father is an imposter. Will you believe him like that?"

The most problematic thing at the moment is convincing the members of the Tang Clan, not reaching the Tang Manor.

How can he convince them that this Tang Wushuang is a fake.

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and asked: "Do you know any Tang disciples?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "I don't know them at all."

Zhu Lei'Er exclaimed with surprise: "Not even one?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Just one a Miss Tang Lin."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him bemused and said: "Tang Lin.....Tang Lin.....a very pretty name. She must be very pretty too."

Yu Peiyu felt he had said too much and just said: "Hmm."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Are you very close to her?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I just met her once."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "Only once and you remember her name that clearly. Not easy."

With a strange, easy jealous girl at his side, he was a bit dumbfounded what to do. The best option was to keep quiet. They passed a local road stall, the noodles and pancakes smelled wonderful.

Yu Peiyu bought a few of those fried pancakes for Zhu Lei'Er and himself, if they would eat they couldn't talk about those embarrassing matters like Tang Lin.

Zhu Lei'Er only took one bite and was still chewing on it.

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Are you still angry?"

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "I'm not that quickly jealous as that Zhong Jing."

She regretted those words and blushed out of embarrassment. She finally swallowed that piece of pancake and said: "I suddenly thought of something."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What is it?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Maybe Yang Zijiang has reached the Tang Manor too." Yu Peiyu nodded in agreement.

Zhu Lei'Er continued: "He knew that we're heading for the Tang Manor."

Yu Peiyu nodded again and said: "Very likely."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Maybe he has devised a plan with the fake Tang Wushuang, when we reach the Tang Manor they will

have many nasty surprises waiting for us.”

Yu Peiyu didn't speak, but his face looked very serious. He too has thought about this problem. But he didn't know how to deal with such a situation if it arose.

He also knew that the chance of exposing this Tang Wushuang was very small.

But he didn't want to tell Zhu Lei'Er about his worries, he didn't want to upset her. He knew she was feeling happy today, he would rather suffer alone than see her sad and worried again.

He was the type of person who would share his happiness gladly with others, but would keep his sorrow in his heart and suffer alone.

Zhu Lei'Er said: “If we go to the Tang Manor like this, we will likely be attacked at once. The Tang Manor is filled with experts and that imposter only has to issue an order.”

Yu Peiyu took a deep breath before saying: “There is no other alternative now.”

Zhu Lei'Er said: “But.....”

She didn't finish her sentence, because a party of riders were coming their way.

Leading these riders was a carriage, Zhu Lei'Er whispered: “They're not from the Tang Manor.”

Yu Peiyu nodded but looked very serious now, Zhu Lei'Er asked: “Shall we ask them what they know about the Tang Manor?”

Yu Peiyu said: “No, that will only arouse their suspicion.”

Zhu Lei'Er said: “I understand.”

The group of riders rode by on their horses, Zhu Lei'Er couldn't resist to look at them.

She saw two muscular men leading now, they wore expensive brocades. There were two strange-looking flags on

the carriage, all the men were talking and laughing.

After they passed Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er, she asked: "Are those people from an armed guard agency?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "Yes, they are."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "I have never seen those before until now. It looks like fun, if I were a man I would like to be an armed guard for one day."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "But the fun would be over if you would meet robbers."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I have heard that usually two or three guards would shout the slogan of their agency to scare off potential robbers. And their flags would be raised highly. But now their flags are put away and there are no guards shouting."

Yu Peiyu said: "That is because they are respecting the Tang Clan. Did you see the casual looks of those men earlier, because they are certain that no one has the audacity to ambush them on Tang territory."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "Just a mere Tang Clan! Please?!? If I wasn't busy right now I would certainly try them out."

Yu Peiyu laughed and thought the daughter of Lady Zhu, the niece of the famous master Feng San wouldn't take the Tang Clan seriously. But how many people can learn the skills of Zhu Mei and/or Feng San.

Suddenly two riders rode by them with incredible speed and yelled: "Chief Wang, chief Qian! Wait a minute!"

Two armed guards recognized the riders as disciples of the Tang clan and said: "Chiefs, two masters of the Tang Manor are here."

The two chiefs came back and asked: "What is wrong?"

Yu Peiyu became extra alert when he knew that those two men were Tang disciples. They wore black robes and looked sad and anxious.

That chief Qian spoke first: "Because it was too early we didn't want to impose on you, so that is why didn't go to the Tang Manor. But we will pay a visit to you after we have finished our job."

He was afraid that the Tang Clan would blame them for being rude, that is why he quickly explained why they didn't pay respects to the Tang Manor.

Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er looked at each other and thought: Could the imposter want to create turmoil in the Wulin of Sichuan province? Are these two sent here to kill these armed guards?

Yu Peiyu couldn't see these innocent people getting killed, if these two would draw their weapons he would immediately intervene.

One of the Tang disciple said: "I received your cards and realised that chief Wang and Qian of the Grand Far Agency were passing by. Please forgive us for not greeting you earlier."

Chief Wang said: "You're too kind."

Chief Qian said: "What brings masters Tang here?"

The other disciple said: "It is because....."

He now lowered his voice and Yu Peiyu, Zhu Lei'Er couldn't hear a word. Zhu Lei'Er looked annoyed and angry.

Both Qian and Wang looked surprised and shocked and said: "No!"

The two Tang disciples only nodded.

Chief Wang whispered something in the ears of the guards and everyone rode along with the two Tang disciples.

When they were gone, Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What has happened in the Tang Manor, why were they so shocked?"

Yu Peiyu looked pensive Zhu Lei'Er added: "Maybe it is all a ruse of that imposter to trick those group of men to the Tang

Manor. We really should find out more about the current situation of the Tang Manor, before we enter."

Yu Peiyu suddenly said: "Can you promise me something?"

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit surprised and said: "Tell me what it is first."

Yu Peiyu said: "Promise me first."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "You're acting like a boy right now, how can I promise you something if I don't know what it is. For all I know you want me to give you a ki....."

She stayed silent and her cheeks turned red.

Yu Peiyu said sincerely: "I have never begged you to do anything before, but now I want you to promise me this."

Zhu Lei'Er bit her lip and said: "Alright, I promise you."

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "After we enter the Tang Manor I want you to go to the restaurant left of the courtyard. That is where the Tang Clan entertain their guests, according to their ancient family directives no one is allowed to use force there."

Zhu Lei'Er remained silent after some time, she said sadly: "Do you really think I can stay there and enjoy food and drinks there."

She noticed that Yu Peiyu's hand was very cold. She understood what he was thinking, she smiled faintly: "But no matter what, I will listen to your request."

When they are walking on the main road to the Tang Manor, they saw more and more Wulin people walking to the Tang Manor. They all looked at Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er, they were all captivated by the charisma of Yu Peiyu and the beauty of Zhu Lei'Er. Some of them were a bit surprised to see Yu Peiyu, it seems that they recognize him, but didn't want to speak to him. All of them looked troubled and a bit sad. What was the reason these people were going to the Tang Manor? What happened in the Tang Manor?

Zhu Lei'Er tightly held on to Yu Peiyu's hand, she asked softly: "Are these people invited over by the imposter? Why would he gather all these people in the Tang Manor, is he planning to ambush them all in one place with the secretive weaponry of the Tang Clan."

Zhu Lei'Er shivered when she remembered the evil tactics of Yu Fanghe and Yang Zijiang. She added: "That way all the important Wulin people of Sichuan province will be eliminated."

Yu Peiyu smiled with difficulty: "They wouldn't dare to plan something that bold."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But everyone in the realm will only look at the Tang Clan, their objectives are to create chaos. The more chaotic, the better in their eyes."

Yu Peiyu said with an uneasy feeling: "Even if they planned something like this, the Tang Clan has bound to have some disciples with some insight, who won't follow orders blindly."

But he said those words to convince himself, he knew that the leader of the Tang Clan was also the head of the clan. The order of the clan head cannot be disobeyed, the orders of the leader of the Tang Clan were even followed closer than the orders of the leaders of Shaolin and Wudang.

They now reached the main doors of the Tang Manor, they heard a lot of weeping sounds and many Wulin people were kneeling in front of the main doors. There were even ten odd Tang disciples wearing mourning clothes kneeling and crying too.

Yu Peiyu recognized two of them as the Thousand Armed Arhat Tang Shouqing and the Iron-faced Yama Tang Shoufang.

These two were outstanding disciples of the Tang Clan and also famous martial artist in the realm. They are in mourning clothes too and are receiving the guests, Yu Peiyu could conclude from this that someone died in the Tang Clan.

He can also make up that this person must be a respected senior in the Tang family. Zhu Lei'Er whispered: "We are too late, he has already killed someone. Who knows how many people have died because their plots? It is strange that he would kill people in the Tang Clan first."

Although she was whispering and nobody could hear what they were talking about, but they all looked around and looked at them. Everyone was kneeling down and they were the only ones standing. Yu Peiyu frowned and pulled Zhu Lei'Er' sleeve, both of them knelt too but Zhu Lei'Er wasn't pleased at all.

They heard someone cry: "Life is so unpredictable, I never thought that old master Tang would pass away. All of us hoped he would live till another 100 years, who would have thought you would leave us now."

Another person said: "Do not be too sad, what has happened has happened. With old master Tang gone, the Wulin affairs in Sichuan rely on the Tang disciples."

The speaker was an old man with a long white beard, he must be a respected Wulin senior and he more or less emphasized the word [disciples].

Meaning he is a senior of the Tang disciples. The Tang disciples all nodded but were still crying.

The person who is dead is none other than Tang Wushuang.

Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er were shocked beyond words and both wondered what had happened in the last few days. When everyone got up Zhu Lei'Er quickly whispered: "I don't think the imposter has died, even Tang Yue said that he couldn't detect any flaws in the fake. The Tang disciples couldn't have seen through him in just two days. Perhaps this is all a ruse to lure these people over here....."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and whispered back: "There are many ways to lure them over, feigning death is not really an option. Judging by the expressions the Tang disciples are

really mourning for the lost of their beloved teacher and/or father.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Could it really be that they saw through him and really killed him?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Unlikely! Because if they found out he was an imposter they wouldn’t declare an official mourning like this.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Could he really just have died like that?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Impossible too! Because with Yu Fanghe’s intelligence they wouldn’t pick a sickly old man for this job. They put too much time and energy in this imposter and it is too much of a coincidence if he really just died of any illness.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “You’re right, but what could it be?”

Yu Peiyu shook his head and did not know how to answer Zhu Lei’Er. Because he really could not guess what happened and did not have a clue where to start to investigate now.

A lot of people entered the Tang Manor with the intentions of paying the last respects to Tang Wushuang. The coffin was in the inner hall of the main hall and a lot of people were weeping in front of it. They could now see that the women of the Tang clan were here and were weeping sadly too.

There were also rows of large tables with food and drinks, Yu Peiyu wondered how many were actually here to pay their final respects to Tang Wushuang.

There are bound to be some who came here for a free meal. Zhu Lei’Er and Yu Peiyu both sat down, but both of them couldn’t eat. Zhu Lei’Er whispered: “Are we just going to eat something and leave? What are we going to do now?”

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly.

Zhu Lei’Er bit her lip and said: “Why won’t you look for Miss Tang Lin? Try to gain some information via her.”

Yu Peiyu could hear the jealous tone in her words and was bemused. At this moment a young maid walk to their table and asked softly Yu Peiyu: "Are you young master Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu wondered how this maid recognized him and what her intentions were, he got up and said respectfully: "My name is indeed Yu Peiyu."

The maid looked at him and even spoke softer now, she gave Yu Peiyu a rather mysterious stare and said: "Young master Yu, you cannot sit here. Please follow me I will lead you to the hall where we entertain our important guests."

Yu Peiyu wondered when he became a VIP, nonetheless he said: "Thank you Miss. But I am fine just here."

The maid said softly: "My third Miss has instructed me to take you there, if young master Yu doesn't follow me I will be blamed by my third mistress."

When Zhu Lei'Er heard the maid say [Third Miss], she became uneasy and said: "In that case, please lead the way."

She got up and pulled Yu Peiyu along with her. The maid looked at Zhu Lei'Er for a moment before saying: "I am afraid there is only one seat in there, it is better Miss if you would stay here."

Zhu Lei'Er just ignored her and continued to pull Yu Peiyu along with her. The maid sort of panicked a bit and said anxiously: "My mistress only ordered that young master Yu could enter. Miss, I suggest....."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled to her: "Not Miss, but Madame Yu."

The maid was shocked beyond words and repeated: "Ma.....Madame Yu....."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Yes, Madame Yu. Anywhere young master Yu goes, Madame Yu will follow."

The maid was still shocked but she composed herself now and said softly: "Follow me please."

Yu Peiyu did not know whether to smile or be angry with Zhu Lei'Er now. Zhu Lei'Er looked at him in a funny way and whispered: "I knew she would look for you sooner or later."

He was lead to a table, sitting at that table too was the old martial arts expert that spoke earlier. Yu Peiyu did not feel for any formalities, so as soon as he sat down he started to eat a bit. Just to avoid to talk to those people. The other guests who were sitting in this hall were all looking at these two youngsters. They all thought it was strange that the Tang Clan would lead them to this place only reserved for the important guests. The other guests all looked down upon Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er, so they deliberately ignored him.

Yu Peiyu was glad to see that. A dark and muscular man in a black robe started to say loudly: "Old master Tang was one of the most respected and prominent Wulin seniors in the realm, it is such a shame that he has passed away. All of us are grieved beyond words."

The same words have been said and heard over and over again for numerous times, everyone looked at this man and wondered why he had to repeat these words so loudly again.

The man added: "Old master Tang has seldom shown himself in public these last years, not many people have the luck to see him. Now that old master Tang has gone, none of us will be able to see him again. I really think we should openly be able to pay our respects to old master Tang and give us the opportunity to see him for one final time."

A Tang disciple stood up and said: "The coffin of our late teacher has been sealed, we thank you for your good intentions. We thank you again for your respect towards our late master."

It was a very polite refusal to the man's request, and the man should be satisfied. However, the man said loudly: "If we cannot see old master Tang for the last time, we will regret it for the rest of our lives."

The Tang disciple said seriously: "The coffin cannot be opened, I hope you can understand this."

All the Tang disciples were all alarmed now and paid attention to this man.

The man did not see the annoyed faces of the guests and the angered faces of the Tang disciples, he continued loudly: "I travelled miles and miles to get to the Tang Manor, I won't be denied in paying my final respects to old master Tang."

He walked over to the coffin with big steps, everyone thought this man was an idiot. Yu Peiyu knew this man had to be here with ulterior motives. Zhu Lei'Er wanted to open the coffin too and wanted to examine the body. She wished to see whether the imposter had really died and how he died. All the Tang disciples who were kneeling in front of the coffin now got up. Normally they would have already seized this man for his insolence, but because they were mourning and did not want to engage in any fights in front of the coffin of their teacher.

Another disciple said: "My friend, I think you're drunk."

The man shouted: "I am not drunk! I haven't even drunk a single drop. I just want to see old master Tang for the last time, is that against the law?"

A man sitting at the table of Yu Peiyu, hit the table and said loudly: "My friend, I suggest you would sit down right now. The friends of the Tang Clan are not in the position to engage in any fights now. But if you would continue to cause trouble, I Yang Rongtai will deal with you personally!"

The Stone Splitting Palms Yang Rongtai is a famous martial arts expert in Sichuan province, his words made a deep impact on everyone.

A voice from outside the hall said coldly: "Yang Rongtai, you shut up! If you're smart you will keep out of this, otherwise I will tell everyone what you did in ShapingCity." Everyone

looked in the direction of the voice, but couldn't see anyone. Yang Rongtai trembled and finally sat down again.

But now another man stood up and looked angry he was about to speak, but the old man who sat next to him said: "Brother Hu, this is an affair of the Tang Clan. They will know how to deal with it."

That man sat down and listened to the old man. Yu Peiyu deducted that the man who was creating a scene was a lackey of Yu Fanghe. And the voice that spoke earlier was also another of Yu Fanghe's henchmen. It seems that this Tang Wushuang died under mysterious circumstances too. Now the Tang disciples who were outside came in too, the Tang disciples had more or less surrounded that man.

The man was not flustered in fact he even shouted louder: "Why do you prevent us from seeing old master Tang for the last time. Did he die under suspicious conditions? If that is the case I must examine that for myself."

At this point all the Tang disciples were furious. One of them said angrily: "I suggest you would mind your language!"

Some of the guests were starting to believe the words of that man and were already whispering. The man said loudly: "I say what I want! All of you must be afraid of something or hiding the truth, why....."

A voice interrupted him: "Enough!"

The voice was not very loud but it travelled very far. A young woman in mourning clothes walked up, she looked sad but also very imposing. She was the second daughter of Tang Wushuang, Tang Qi. Left to Tang Qi was Li Peiling, the eldest daughter-in-law of Tang Wushuang and the right was Tang Lin. Tang Lin looked sad and melancholic, she (un)intentionally looked at Yu Peiyu with sadness.

Tang Qi bowed to the guests and the rest of the disciples followed her example. Tang Qi said respectfully: "This unfilial daughter thanks everyone for coming here. I, on behalf of

the entire Tang Clan would like to thank everyone for coming.”

Everyone said: “You’re too kind, Miss Tang.”

Tang Qi said: “Initially I did not want to come out here, I was afraid I would be an unworthy host.....”

She paused for a minute and looked at the man who was creating the scene. She looked very sharp and stern at him and asked: “May I ask what your name is?”

The man coughed dryly before saying: “My name is Wei Senlin. I am a nobody in Wulin. But.....”

Tang Qi coldly interrupted: “Very good! Wei Senlin, I would like to ask you who sent you here?”

Yu Peiyu praised Tang Qi in his heart: This Miss Tang is really formidable, she is a perceptive and intelligent woman. She figured out that a fool like Wei Shenlin must be instructed to come here and create a scene. Wei Shenlin cannot answer that question and by that the Tang Clan also does not have to explain anything to Wei Shenlin.

Wei Senlin’s face changed and said: “I....I am here to pay my final respects to old master Tang. Nobody instructed or sent me.”

Tang Qi said coldly: “This is not the appropriate place for us to engage anyone in battle, but if you do not tell us the truth.....”

She waved her hand slightly and everyone could hear a gong being sounded very loud.

Tang Qi asked Wei Senlin: “Can you hear that gong?”

Wei Senlin stuttered: “Yes....yes....I can.....”

Tang Qi said: “If the gong is sounded another two more times, you will die here on the spot. However if you would tell the truth now.....” There was no anger in her voice only tranquility but it was enough to scare Wei Senlin out of his wits.

Wei Senlin turned pale and said with fear in his voice: "I am telling the truth."

Tang Qi ignored him now and folded her hands. Wei Senlin turned around and wanted to run out of here, but when he reached the doors he saw he was blocked by two men. They were the Thousand Armed Arhat Tang Shouqing and the Iron-faced Yama Tang Shoufang.

Tang Shoufang was known for being ruthless in battles, he was looking he was about to kill. Wei Senling shivered and backed away from him.

The gong was sounded another time, but at the same time everyone called out with surprise. Everyone looked at the direction of the coffin and Tang Qi turned too and shrieked with surprise.

The lid of the coffin was removed and Tang Wushuang's body was erected up.

His face was pale and looked awfully eerie now.

Tang Qi said sternly: "There is someone behind the coffin."

Tang Shoufang and Tang Shouqing quickly advanced towards the coffin. Suddenly the corpse of Tang Wushuang flew out of the coffin and into the air, Yu Peiyu guessed that someone was using powerful internal energy to force Tang Wushuang's body out of the coffin. But still he was feeling quite nervous and surprised too now.

Tang Shoufang and Tang Shouqing did not want to touch the body of their teacher but had no choice to catch it, otherwise it would fall on the ground.

A voice from the coffin said: "Tang Wushuang has come out of his coffin now, pay your respects to him."

Everyone recognized it was the mysterious voice they heard earlier that warned Yang Rongtai.

Five Tang disciples surrounded the coffin and one of them said: "Come out now!" All of them had taken out their Tang

secretive weapons now.

There was no response and all of five them shot out their projectiles, the special projectile techniques of the Tang Clan are unmatched in the world.

The speed, accuracy were incredible and it seemed that the projectiles could manoeuvre themselves in mid-air.

The voice laughed and the projectiles changed course and flew back towards the Tang disciples.

The speed and accuracy was ten times better than the Tang disciples shot out.

The disciples used their right arms to cover their faces and their left palms to block their chests.

The leapt backwards and the projectiles landed a few centimetres away from them. Still some projectiles hit them on the shoulders and arms, they quickly took out a bottle and swallowed the antidote. They immediately sat down and did not move again. These disciples very well knew the lethality of the Tang poison, so they quickly shielded their faces and chests. If the poison entered the body via the chest even with antidote one would die. If you're hit in the face one could survive by cutting off the flesh which has infected. However the pain is unimaginable.

Now Tang Shoufang and Tang Shouqing have caught the body and put it down, they now slowly moved towards the coffin. Their martial arts were much higher than the other disciples and they were more vigilant. But suddenly the coffin was split into two halves and each half flew towards the two of them with incredible speed.

The wooden parts came crashing down on them with incredible force and speed, they did not dare to use their hands to block it and jumped backwards with a few steps but the wooden boards were still flying towards them and they had no choice but to roll aside to avoid that blow. The wooden boards hit the wall and it completely shattered. The debris

hit some of the guests here and there, they all called out in pain.

Everyone was shocked by this person's incredible martial arts, now everyone noticed a young man in a green robe was standing next to Tang Wushuang's body.

He was smiling and seemed to be indifferent that he was completely surrounded by the Tang disciples at this moment. Only Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu recognized this young man and the rest of the people were amazed to see a young lad like him to have such extraordinary martial arts.

It was Yang Zijiang. He was finally here, all the disciples were waiting for one order and they would attack this arrogant man.

Tang Qi shouted: "Stay calm everyone!"

All the disciples obeyed her command and backed away a bit from Yang Zijiang.

Tang Qi has more or less assumed actual command of the Tang Clan when Tang Wushuang retired years ago. With Tang Wushuang actually dead now, they now see Tang Qi as the actual leader of the Tang Clan.

Tang Qi looked at Yang Zijiang coldly and said: "Judging by your martial arts you must be a pupil of an esteemed martial arts expert. However what is the reason for creating chaos here, in our eyes your actions are regarded as a humiliation towards us. Are your actions now also one of your teachings your master taught you?"

Her words were very fitting, she deliberately mentioned the teacher of Yang Zijiang. By this she more or less made sure that Yang Zijiang's words would affect him and his teacher, by this Yang Zijiang could not spout nonsense.

Yang Zijiang looked at Tang Qi for a moment before saying: "No wonder people say that Miss Tang Qi is a fierce woman. A true shrew....."

He was yawning after he was done and looked around and said: "My name is Yang Zijiang, I am not a disciple of any famous orthodox school. Nor do I belong to any prominent Wulin family. I would not dare to be rude against old master Tang but I am here to address the grievance of old master Tang."

Everyone saw the trouble he went through to open the coffin and when everybody heard him say [grievance]. They started to believe his story.

Tang Qi slowly lost her patience and scoffed: "So Wei Senling was instructed by you to create a scene, therefore you could have sneaked up at my father's coffin and opened it."

Yang Zijiang said indifferently: "I am willing to do anything if it means I can address the grievance of old master Tang."

Tang Qi said sternly: "My father died of natural causes, even if my father had any unsolved matters. We as their sons, daughters and pupils will take care of it personally."

Yang Zijiang said: "Really? You really can take care of it personally?"

Tang Qi said: "Of course!"

Yang Zijiang said: "Very well! Let us see how old master Tang died and....."

He pulled up Tang Wushuang's body at the same time.

Tang Qi yelled: "How dare you! Do not touch the body of my father."

She knew that Yang Zijiang's martial arts were very high and it was also the reason why she did not order an attack on him yet. But now she had no choice but to attack. Her two hands formed a pair of claws and she aimed for his throat and eyes. A most lethal stance.

Both Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er knew she wasn't his match and were worried for her.

Tang Shoufang and Tang Shouqing followed her example and attacked too now, Yang Zijiang smiled: "Is that the best the Tang disciples can do?"

He twirled around and used the body of Tang Wushuang as a shield. The three of them couldn't use their stances on the body of Tang Wushuang and retreated back.

Tang Shoufang angrily shouted: "Let go of the body of our late teacher and we will spare you!"

Yang Zijiang laughed: "I couldn't die anyway, so you don't need to spare me."

He started to remove the clothes of Tang Wushuang's body, Tang Qi turned pale and yelled: "No matter what! I will kill you first!"

She did not care for her own safety anymore and attacked with everything she had.

Yang Zijiang shouted: "Everyone can see for yourself! The Tang Clan are trying to cover up the real cause of old master Tang's death."

All of the guests were confused and even some of the Tang disciples were hesitant now. Tang Shoufang and Tang Shouqing exchanged looks and did not join the attack on Yang Zijiang with Tang Qi.

Some guests even urged: "Miss Tang, please let him examine the body of old master Tang. That way all of us will feel secure."

At this point Tang Qi had already attacked almost with forty stances but she couldn't touch a corner of Yang Zijiang's robe. Even now she knew that Yang Zijiang was a formidable expert and she was no match for him.

She stopped her attack and tears were flowing from her eyes, she sobbed: "Even you say that now....If I continue it will only make us more suspicious....but.....but....my late father's body cannot be tarnished by....a rogue.....like this...."

She was crying loudly and almost fainted with anger and sorrow, Li Peiling and Tang Lin quickly helped her up.

Tang Shoufang said sternly: "Yang Zijiang, you can examine all you want but if you cannot discover anything.....All the 500 disciples of the Tang Clan will be your enemy!"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "If I cannot discover anything I will kill myself right here, there is no need to trouble all of you."

He now looked very serious and added: "Because I know that old master Tang died at the hands of his own clan."

Everybody was shocked when they heard this and numerous Tang disciples yelled: "Nonsense! Prepare to die!"

"How dare you accuse us of such a crime!"

"Nobody will believe those fantastic lies of yours! Show us any evidence if you have!"

Yang Zijiang said loudly: "You want proof? This is the evidence you want to see!"

He raised his hands and lifted Tang Wushuang's body up high. A large number of Tang disciples now stormed towards him and Yang Zijiang held Tang's body with one arm and leapt up high and was sitting on a beam high above everyone else.

The Tang disciples could not use their secretive weapons, they were afraid they might hit the body of Tang Wushuang.

Some disciples leapt up too but were forced down by Yang Zijiang's powerful palm energy.

Yang Zijiang shouted: "Old master Tang was killed by a Tang projectile and was found dead in his own home. So the killer is obviously a Tang disciple!"

The Tang disciples were furious but there was nothing they could except curse Yang Zijiang for his lies.

Yang Zijiang said loudly: "I will present the evidence to you, but I want a few prominent people to be a witness."

Tang Qi composed herself again and said calmly: "Very well! I would like to ask The Celestial Monkey of Mount Su old master Yuan, Golden Sabre uncle Hu, The Stone Splitting Palmsuncle Yang and young master Yu Peiyu to be the witnesses."

Yu Peiyu was surprised to hear his name being mentioned, Zhu Lei'Er pulled his sleeve and whispered with happiness: "Haven't you realised that you're a famous martial arts expert nowadays."

The old man with the long white beard, who ignored Yu Peiyu earlier, now stood up and walked over to Yu Peiyu and said respectfully: "So you're the famous young master Yu. Even master Nu has only praise of you, please forgive me for being rude earlier."

News travels fast in Wulin, something which only happened less than one month ago has now reached the ears of many. Those arrogant men like Yang Rongtai and Hu Yi now carefully observed Yu Peiyu and thought: Is this exceptionally handsome young man was responsible for so many spectacular deeds recently?

Yu Peiyu was shocked and modestly said: "I do not deserve such fame, sir."

The old man said: "My name is Yuan Gongming of Mount Su, I hope young master Yu can give me some pointers and advice in the future."

Yu Peiyu repeated several times modestly: "Please do not say such a thing, old sir. I wouldn't dream of doing that. I should come by at your residence some time and listen to your teachings."

The rest of the guests and Tang disciples made some room for the people in question.

Tang Qi asked: "Do you agree with these four witnesses?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Even if I don't agree with the other three, I truly believe in young master Yu Peiyu. I have heard

that Yu Peiyu is a famous honest gentleman for a long time, it is my pleasure to finally to meet you.”

He gently came down and smiled friendly towards Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu wondered why Yang Zijiang was so friendly towards him. It made Yu Peiyu even more vigilant towards Yang Zijiang.

Yang Zijiang put the body down and said: “Take a look at the wound of old master Tang.”

He removed an oil plaster from Tang Wushuang’s chest. The plaster was covered with a thick layer of make-up and was not easily detected.

Yang Zijiang rubbed away the layer of make-up and revealed a blackish purple wound and he added: “Look what I am holding in my hand.”

He opened his palm and there was a metallic shaped flower shaped object, the famous Tang projectile: The poisoned spiked bludgeon. This is one of the most original secretive weapons of the Tang Clan. Everyone recognized it and now stayed quiet and looked very serious.

Tang Shoufang angrily shouted: “Where did you get that spiked bludgeon?”

Yang Zijiang smiled: “Your fellow martial arts brothers shot 28 spiked bludgeons towards. I repelled 27 and kept only one. If you do not believe me count them if you please.”

Tang Shoufang’s face looked awfully pale and kept quiet.

Yang Zijiang placed the spiked bludgeon on the wound of Tang Wushuang’s body, it was a perfect match.

Yang Zijiang said: “Old master Tang was killed by his own weapon, you can see for yourselves now.”

When they saw the colour of the wound they already knew Tang Wushuang was killed by a Tang secretive weapon, every type of poison has a different effect.

For instance, The crane's red dot causes one to bleed from his eyes, ears, nose and mouth before he dies. The silver moss causes one to have convulsions before dying, the silver kiss will make one's body as hard as rock before one dies. The seven steps grass will make your body rot away slowly before you die with extreme pain, the bite of the spotted serpent will make your body break out in red spots.

The poison of the Tang Clan will colour one's body to a deep, dark purple.

Yang Zijiang scoffed: "Old master Tang died in his own manor, he was ambushed with a Tang projectile. It is obvious that a Tang disciple is responsible for this."

Yang Zijiang looked at Yuan Gongming and said: "You tell me."

Yuan Gongming looked pale but did not speak.

Yang Zijiang coldly said: "I knew you are sly old fox, but will never be able or have the courage to become an evil man."

He now turned to Hu Yi and said coldly: "Normally you compare yourself with heroes from the Warring States Period like Zhu Hai and Han dynasty hero like Guo Jie. Aren't you going to say something?"

Hu Yi's face turned red out of embarrassment and said: "Perhaps someone...someone stole a Tang spiked bludgeon and used it to kill old master Tang."

Yang Zijiang scoffed: "If that is the case why wouldn't the Tang Clan publicly announce that, but instead they said that Tang Wushuang died of old age."

Hu Yi kept quiet.

Everyone was convinced that Tang Wushuang died at the hands of a Tang disciple. All of them looked serious now especially the people from the Tang Clan looked most angry and serious now.

Yang Zijiang looked at Yu Peiyu for a moment but soon he turned to Tang Shoufang: "Normally you're a righteous and honest man, how about today?"

Tang Shoufang gritted his teeth and everyone saw that there was blood dripping from the corners of his mouth. He gritted so hard with anger that he actually grinded a few of his teeth.

Tang Shouqing coughed dryly first and sighed: "It is most unfortunate that this happened. We would like to thank you for pointing out this terrible crime, the entire Tang Clan owes you. But how did you know that our late teacher died under suspicious circumstances?"

His talking skills were as formidable as Tang Qi, he sounded very friendly but in fact there was a lot hate and anger hidden in his words.

Translation of his words would be: "Our teacher did not die because of natural causes, nobody knew this. How do you know this? Are you connected to this crime in some way?"

Everyone now (un)intentionally looked at Yang Zijiang and suspected him to be involved somehow.

Yang Zijiang said casually: "Well, there are no secrets that can be hidden from men. Besides I parted with old master Tang three days ago. He was in excellent condition when I saw him, that is why I became suspicious. How can someone die JUST LIKE THAT in two days.....most strange, wouldn't you agree?"

Yang Zijiang emphasized the words [just like that]. When he noticed his words made an impact on the people he added: "Although I just met old master Tang recently I cannot allow him to die under strange circumstances. Wouldn't everybody here do the same thing?"

His words sounded most righteous and there were no flaws in his reasoning.

Tang Shouqing sighed deeply: "I am most impressed by your deductive skills, all of us are grateful for your help so far. However there are more than 500 adult Tang disciples and only about 130 people are trained in using the spiked bludgeon. It will be most difficult to find out who the killer is, I hope you trust us to deal with this affair internally. We will give you a satisfying answer when this is over and find a way to repay your kindness."

Yang Zijiang sneered: "Initially affairs of the Tang Clan should not be questioned by outsiders, but now.....I think your words mean little to us at the moment."

Tang Shouqing said: "I can guarantee you....."

Yang Zijiang interrupted him: "Guarantee? Did old master Tang die in his private quarters?"

Tang Shouqing stuttered: "This....this...."

Yang Zijiang said: "If he didn't die in his private quarters, all of you would have known how he really died. I wouldn't be standing here wasting my breath now."

Tang Shouqing had no choice but to say: "Indeed, our late teacher did die in his own private quarters."

Yang Zijiang said: "Let me ask you another question: Of those 130 people how many can enter his private quarters casually?"

Tang Shouqing was silenced now, everyone knew that this Yang Zijiang was not only a powerful martial artist but also a skilled orator.

All the Tang disciples lowered their heads, nobody dared to look at Tang Qi. Because they were afraid to look at her, by doing so they now revealed she and only a few other Tang female members could enter the private quarters of Tang Wushuang casually. But they felt that this was a total embarrassment and did not want outsiders to know about it.

With the exception of the Tang disciples, everyone now looked at Tang Qi with a strange look. Not many people can endure such a look.

Chapter 32 : Cataclysm From Nowhere

“It is him, Yu Peiyu!”

All the Tang disciples roared angrily and surrounded Yu Peiyu now, they would love to tear Yu Peiyu apart right now. Yu Peiyu went through a lot in these months, he has been wrongfully accused several times for being mad, killing his teacher, etc.

The normal ever so calm and intelligent Tang Qi was now being suspected of killing her own father.

She was trembling with anger and sorrow now, she did not know what to say now.

Suddenly one of the guests yelled: “In other words you’re saying that one of his own daughters killed old master Tang?”

This person sounded like he was defending Tang Qi, but in fact he himself has said the words and thoughts of everyone else. Which made Tang Qi even more suspicious.

Yang Zijiang scoffed: “Men and women are both capable of doing anything when it comes to power.”

Another guest shouted: “So you think that Miss Tang Qi killed her father so she could be leader of the Tang Clan. Nobody will believe your lies!”

This person was not helping at all, he should have stayed quiet. With his words he only convinced more and more people that Tang Qi really did kill her father because of power within the Tang Clan.

Yang Zijiang scoffed: “If she wasn’t involved why would she not agree to my suggestion to examine the body of old master Tang. Furthermore wouldn’t she have noticed how old master Tang died when she found her father’s body.”

A lot of guests exclaimed with surprise and even Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er were beginning to believe the story of Yang Zijiang.

Yu Peiyu thought: If Tang Qi really killed her father because of a power struggle, that would be truly be a funny twist of fate. Because this imposter was partly responsible for the death of her real father, so she kind of avenged her father now.

Yang Zijiang looked at Tang Qi with his sharp eyes and said sternly: "What do you have to say now, Miss Tang?"

Tang Qi said calmly: "You really want me to tell the truth?"

Yang Zijiang scoffed: "Will you tell the truth?"

Tang Qi said sternly now: "I will tell you the truth, all of you will know it now."

She took a deep breath and was about to speak now.

"Stop, I will tell them what happened!" The speaker was Tang Lin, this normally very shy girl who hardly spoke at all was now about to tell everyone how her "father" really died. Even Yu Peiyu was a bit shocked to hear her now.

Tang Qi looked at her sister with surprise and said: "You....."

Tang Lin interrupted her with a serious face: "When our father passed away only I was present. It is best that I would tell everyone what happened."

Yang Zijiang too was a bit surprised and asked: "You?"

Tang Lin nodded and said: "Yes, me."

Yang Zijiang frowned and asked: "Are you responsible for the death of old master Tang?"

He was really surprised, this was something he did not count on Tang Lin killing Tang Wushuang. Tang Lin had no motive at all.

Li Peiling gently held Tang Lin's hand and said softly: "You must be overwhelmed by sorrow now. Stay aside we will deal

with this our way.”

Tang Lin said resolutely: “I’m not overwhelmed by sorrow at all, if I do not tell the truth eldest sister will be wrongfully accused.”

Tang Qi looked at her little sister with surprise and gratitude.

Tang Lin started to tell: “That night when everyone was asleep, I remembered that I had to ask my father something. So I went to his room.”

Yang Zijiang asked: “What was it that you wanted to talk to your father about?”

Tang Lin said coldly: “That is a private matter, do you wish to know the personal affairs of other people too?”

Yang Zijiang smiled and remained silent now.

Tang Lin continued: “However when I reached my father’s room I heard him talking to someone else. I was quite surprised to see my father receiving guests this late. Furthermore if there were guests we should also be informed, so I figured this guest was an unwelcome guest.”

Yang Zijiang said coldly: “The Tang Manor is well guarded, it is not easy for someone to sneak into the private quarters of old master Tang.”

Tang Lin said: “It is practically impossible to sneak inside.”

Yang Zijiang said: “How did this “guest” enter?”

Tang Lin said: “There is a secret tunnel from outside the manor leading to my father’s quarters. It seems that this guest has arranged to meet my father and my father received him via the tunnel.”

When she even told everyone about the secret passage in her father’s quarters, people were beginning to believe what she had to say.

Tang Lin said: “I thought it would be impolite to eavesdrop but I did not just want to leave like that because I wanted to talk to my father urgently. While I was hesitating I heard my

father saying loudly: [Although you and I are close friends I cannot lend you the secretive weaponry of my clan! That is against my clan's ancient directives!]"

Yang Zijiang commented: "This person is very bold and arrogant, how dare he try to borrow Tang secretive weapons from old master Tang."

Tang Lin said: "At that moment I thought this person was too arrogant and my father had denied his request. However he tried again to persuade my father to lend him a few Tang weapons."

Yang Zijiang asked: "What did he say?"

Tang Lin said: "That man said: [This matter is very serious, if I succeed you and your clan will benefit from it too. If you're not willing to join me personally, at least lend me a few of your Tang weapons.]"

Yang Zijiang asked: "Was old master Tang convinced by him?"

Tang Lin said: "No, my father had to uphold the regulations set by our ancestors."

Yang Zijiang said: "So old master Tang did not give him the weapons he wanted, so he isn't the killer."

Tang Lin said: "That man continued to persuade my father, I was afraid my father would not say no in the end. So I entered my father's room with the hope that he would leave my father alone."

Yang Zijiang asked: "Did that man see you?"

Tang Lin said coldly: "Of course he did, he isn't blind. He was a bit surprised to see me but he continued to persuade my father."

Yang Zijiang asked: "Does he recognize you?"

Tang Lin nodded and said sadly: "Because he knows me, he knew I wouldn't be too protective. So he managed to steal a spiked bludgeon from my pouch."

Yang Zijiang scoffed: "So this man is also a skilled thief....."

Tang Lin sighed: "He was very fast, even my father did not see his move."

Yang Zijiang stared at her with his stern eyes and said loudly: "Why are you carrying your projectiles in your own home? You even had them on your body when you went to your father's room! Why?"

Tang Lin said: "Tang disciples are supposed to carry their weapons even when they're asleep."

Yang Zijiang asked coldly: "Is that another ancient Tang regulation?"

Tang Lin replied: "Yes, indeed."

Yang Zijiang said: "So he used that stolen spiked bludgeon to kill your father?"

Tang Lin said sadly: "When my father saw him out through the secret tunnel, he suddenly turned around to make an about to leave gesture. However he patted with his left hand on my father's chest, concealed in his left palm was the spiked bludgeon. Neither my father and I suspected a thing."

Everyone now believed about 70 per cent of her story. Although some of the pieces of the puzzle were not entirely in place yet, but she had something to do with her father's death.

Yang Zijiang sighed deeply: "In other words you were present when that man killed old master Tang."

Tang Lin said: "Yes, I was."

Yang Zijiang said sternly now: "Why didn't you say a thing earlier! Why did you wait till now!"

Tang Lin lowered her head and said sadly: "Because....because he was my fiancé. My father has betrothed me to him."

Everyone was surprised by this and some people even called out with surprise.

All the people looked at her with compassion, surprise and sorrow, Yu Peiyu sighed too in his heart and felt sorry for her. He did not know that it would be this complicated.

Tang Lin was in tears now and said: "I wanted to kill him when I saw what he did, but he knelt in front of me and begged me to help him. When I saw him like that I could not bear to expose him....."

Yang Zijiang said coldly: "Women betrothed are no longer worried about their own parents anymore. You're not the only one and shall never be the final one to betray their parents for their lover."

Tang Lin cried: "Don't say those nasty words now! I know I deserve to die and I regret my decision. That is why I was so eager to lead the funeral to cover up for my crimes."

Yang Zijiang said: "Are your other brothers, sisters also involved in this?"

Tang Lin sobbed: "They know nothing about this entire incident."

Yang Zijiang scoffed: "You're very brave, very very brave. This way only you will take the fall for this crime!"

Tang Lin sobbed: "I will take responsibility for my own crimes."

Yang Zijiang said: "What about your fiancé? Doesn't anyone know who he is?"

Tang Lin said: "My father arranged for this engagement in private and wanted to announce it during my 18th birthday.....but I never guessed that my father would be....gone before....."

She started to cry loudly again.

Yang Zijiang sternly said: "So you wish to keep protecting this man!"

Tang Lin was sobbing sadly.

A lot of other people were saying:

“Tell us who that bastard is!”

“If you don’t tell us, how can you face your late father and ancestors, Miss Tang.”

Tang Lin now looked up and looked very determined. She gritted her teeth and pointed to a man and said: “It is him!”

Nobody in this world would have thought she would point at Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu himself was completely dumbfounded, he thought Tang Lin was pointing at the person standing behind him and turned around to look.

However Tang Lin added: “It is him, Yu Peiyu!”

All the Tang disciples roared angrily and surrounded Yu Peiyu now, they would love to tear Yu Peiyu apart right now.

Yu Peiyu went through a lot in these months, he has been wrongfully accused several times for being mad, killing his teacher, etc.

But still he was too shocked by this sudden twist of fate, he did not even know what to say in his own defense.

Now the guests started to curse and swear too. Some were saying the following:

“So this fellow is responsible for the death of old master Tang! He has a lot of nerves to show himself here!”

“He looks like a distinguished young gentleman, I never thought he would be such a despicable vile fiend!”

“He looks very charming and handsome, it is not surprising that Miss Tang fell for him and is so much in love with him.”

Zhu Lei’Er was also too shocked to say anything, however she quickly composed herself when she heard those people cursing Yu Peiyu. She came to his defense and yelled: “It is not him! You are all wrong!”

She pushed aside the people surrounding Yu Peiyu and tightly clung on to his arm and yelled: "He wouldn't do something like this! Besides two days ago he was with me, we're miles away from the Tang Manor. He couldn't have come here at all!"

Tang Shoufang sternly asked: "What is your relationship to this man?"

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "I am his wife!"

Tang Shouqing sighed: "Miss, I think you too are deceived by him. He is probably just using you."

Zhu Lei'Er shouted: "Why....why don't you believe me? Why do have to wrongfully accuse him!"

Tang Shouqing sighed: "He is not worth it Miss. He will betray you too sooner or later."

Zhu Lei'Er yelled: "Who did he deceive? Tell me!"

Tang Shoufang angrily said: "He was supposed to be son-in-law of our clan, but he still has an affair with you. Such a despicable monster! How dare you speak on his behalf!"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "He was never supposed be any son-in-law of your clan!"

Tang Shouqing asked: "How do you know?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Ever since I met him, I have been around him and have never left his side."

Tang Shouqing asked sharply: "How long have you known him?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I....."

She did not know what to say now, because she only knew Yu Peiyu for about a month. She did not know what he did before she knew him and Yu Peiyu had never told her much about himself. She was now not even sure if Yu Peiyu was his real name. Tang Shouqing noticed the change on her face and said softly: "Miss, this doesn't concern you, stand aside please."

Zhu Lei'Er woke up from her thoughts and said:
"What...what are you going to do?"

The Tang disciples looked very serious now, nobody answered her question but it was obvious they were about to attack at any moment. They had already taken out their most lethal secretive weapons, nothing would make them happier than to kill the murderer of their teacher. They had Yu Peiyu surrounded.

Yu Peiyu sighed and told Zhu Lei'Er: "This doesn't concern you, go over there."

He knew it was impossible to escape from the Tang Manor now, he did not want to see Zhu Lei'Er getting hurt over him. Furthermore he too noticed the change in Zhu Lei'Er, he felt that she too began to question him.

Zhu Lei'Er said resolutely: "No matter what, I don't believe that you are involved in this!"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "It doesn't matter whether you believe me or not, they believe I killed Tang Wushuang and they will not believe your words."

He looked up and sighed deeply: "Even if they are others who believe me, will they really come out and speak on my behalf."

Zhu Lei'Er broke out in tears, Tang Lin pushed aside everyone and walked up to Yu Peiyu.

She said: "Yu Peiyu, please forgive me. I....I did not want it to end like this either."

Yu Peiyu smiled tragically to her: "Good! Very good!"

Tang Lin sobbed: "When you die I don't want to live either....."

Zhu Lei'Er was furious when she saw and heard Tang Lin, she angrily shouted: "You, despicable woman! You're responsible for all of this! How dare you say such things to him now!"

She flew up and raised her palm to strike Tang Lin down.

Tang Lin did not defend or avoid, she just stood there and said: "Very well! Let us all die together today!"

Zhu Lei'Er could instantly seize her throat, Tang Shouqing wanted to intervene but was by Tang Shoufang. He said earnestly: "She is shame to the family, let her die! Do you wish to save her!"

Tang Shouqing looked at Tang Lin for a moment and when he saw her pale face, he did not want to intervene anymore.

Most of the guests were scolding to: "Yu Peiyu, if you have any shame you would kill yourself on the spot!"

"Tang brothers, what are you waiting for!"

"We want to see the blood of this ruthless killer flow!"

Yu Peiyu stayed quiet, because he realised that these people were blinded by hate and were beyond reasoning.

Suddenly a young clear voice outvoiced all these people: "Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu! What kind of misfortune do you keep encountering? Somehow you managed to become the killer of Tang Wushuang, it is best that you die at my hands that way you will be spared the humiliation."

It was Yang Zijiang who was sitting on a roofbeam again drinking wine and eating an apple.

Tang Shoufang sternly said: "What do you mean? Yu Peiyu is responsible for the death of our teacher!"

Yang Zijiang scoffed: "Really? Where is the evidence? Who saw him actually kill old master Tang?"

Tang Shoufang said: "You heard the words of third Miss Tang too."

Yang Zijiang shook his head and sighed: "Just because of the testimony of one girl, you are passing verdict on someone....I think you're being too rash."

Tang Shoufang angrily yelled: "Are you saying that Tang Lin is lying?"

Some of the other guests are shouting: "Miss Tang has no reasons to lie!"

Yang Zijiang said: "Besides bringing doom over Yu Peiyu she also brought doom over herself. I don't know why she is lying but I AM SURE SHE IS LYING!"

Tang Shoufang asked angrily: "How do you know? Why do you believe this Yu Peiyu is innocent!"

Yang Zijiang said: "Because I know he was miles away from the Tang Manor when Tang Wushuang was murdered."

Tang Shouqing sneered: "Why should we believe you?"

Yang Zijiang sighed: "I know I cannot convince all of you. I will stay quiet now."

Suddenly there was a loud Crack and the beam broke into two halves and a large part of the roof came toppling down on the people below.

Everyone started to panic and people were pushing to get out of harm's way, people with inferior martial arts were pushed down on the floor and yelled in pain.

Experts like Tang Shoufang, Tang Shouqing and others were also trying their best to avoid being hit by bricks and wooden beams. They covered their heads and try to get to a safer place. However a wooden beam landed on Tang Shoufang's leg and broke it, he broke out in a cold sweat because of the pain. Still he managed to yell: "Don't let Yu Peiyu get away! Block the doors!"

But everyone in the hall was in a frantic state and did not listen or hear Tang Shoufang.

Tang Shoufang added: "Search the entire manor! Don't let him escape!"

A group of lightly injured disciples rushed to the doors to pursue, but suddenly a shower of bricks knocked them out of the way.

They heard Yang Zijiang laughing on another beam:
“Pursue? Who are you pursueing? If you keep doubting my words I will have to tear down the entire Tang Manor.”

In the commotion, Yu Peiyu heard Yang Zijiang saying softly to him: “I will deal with this lot here, storm your way out of here. Someone will receive you when you have left the Tang Manor.....”

Before he could finish, Yu Peiyu had already picked up the unconscious Tang Lin and pulled Zhu Lei’Er along.

Yu Peiyu stormed outside the hall and some of the people who heard the commotion wanted to go inside and have a look. But they bumped into Yu Peiyu and fell down, Yu Peiyu stormed outside with incredible speed and accidentally knocked down tables and doors. The people outside were also panicking now, most of these people here were not Wulin people. They were just people who live near the Tang Manor, ordinary people who come here with their families for a free meal. But things did not turn out as they expected, people were pushed over and lightly injured.

Women were screaming, children were crying.

Fortunately Yu Peiyu was an extremely calm person and after all those inhuman trials he was even more adaptive in chaotic situations.

Yu Peiyu pulled Zhu Lei’Er to a small alley in the TangCity.

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Why aren’t we going outside the Tang Manor?”

Yu Peiyu said: “That Yang Zijiang’s words are still questionable, although he saved us but we should still not entirely trust him.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “I agree. I have no clue as why he saved us instead of killing us in the commotion earlier.”

Yu Peiyu lead Zhu Lei’Er to a rather remote place of the TangCity, Zhu Lei’Er asked: “What is this place?” She saw a

lot of rooms and chambers around but nobody could be seen right now.

Yu Peiyu answered: "These are the private quarters of the Tang disciples."

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised and shocked: "We should keep a distance between us and the Tang Manor. What are we doing here? Haven't we had enough trouble because of the Tang disciples?"

Yu Peiyu said: "This is the only way we can take now."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Of course! Now everyone will be searching for us outside, they won't think we will be here."

Before Yu Peiyu could answer, they heard a voice from behind: "Don't move! Do you really think you can escape!"

A group of ten odd young men lead by Tang Shoufang were here, Tang Shoufang was crippling but he was a tough man and did not want people to see he was injured.

Zhu Lei'Er angrily shouted: "You again!?! Why do keep following us around!"

Tang Shoufang did not know he would find Yu Peiyu here, because the main doors were blocked by Yang Zijiang he had to take a different route. It was pure coincidence to find Yu Peiyu here.

Sometimes one tries to move mountains and seas to find somebody or something but in the end it is all in vain. However sometimes one will meet or encounter that person or object one has been looking for in the places one least expect.

When Tang Shoufang and those disciples heard Zhu Lei'Er they quickly scattered themselves around Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu. They were ready to engage the enemies.

But they were afraid that they might injure Tang Lin so they did not attack yet. Zhu Lei'Er understood that and put her palm on Tang Lin's head and smiled: "We are not responsible

for the death of old Mr. Tang Wushuang, there are no grudges between us and the Tang Clan. Let us go and we will return Miss Tang to you, what do you say?" Zhu Lei'Er felt that her words were very appropriate and even Wulin seniors could not say it better than her, which was true.

But Tang Shoufang did not reply to her, in fact he just ignored her words. He just said sternly: "Virulent Sand!"

The Virulent Sand of the Tang Clan was the most aggressive venoms they had. It could not travel very far but it was very suitable for engaging enemies who stood very close. When the sand was released the adversary will be shrouded in a cloud of lethal sand. If you are hit by even one grain of sand you will have to cut off your infected flesh using the method of the famous physician Hua Tuo in the Three Kingdoms Period, if not you would rot and within three days you will die horribly.

Tang Shoufang was not called the Iron-faced Yama for nothing, amongst this group of young Tang disciples there were some who were quite fond of Tang Lin. They were hoping to save her, but when they heard the order from Tang Shoufang, they all looked worried and sad. But they did not dare to defy Tang Shoufang's order and put on their leather gloves and reached for the pouch with the virulent sand.

They had their hands in the pouches, Yu Peiyu knew that in a matter of moments they will be surrounded by a cloud of deadly dust. Yu Peiyu immediately came to action and stormed to the left.

Yu Peiyu saw that those two young men looked sad when they heard the order of Tang Shoufang. He took advantage of their hesitant state and hoped the three of them could escape from the lethal grains of sand. But those Tang disciples could use the virulent sand to attack in the backs, that way it will be extremely difficult to avoid that assault.

Suddenly a voice said: "Stop right now!" It was Tang Qi.

Li Peiling and Tang Qi rushed over, there were eight maids with martial arts following them.

Tang Shoufang yelled: "Use the sand, don't let them escape!"

Tang Qi shouted: "Stop!"

Tang Shoufang ordered: "Attack!"

Tang Qi sternly said to Tang Shoufang: "Shoufang, do you really want to kill third sister too?"

The Tang disciples were in a state of confusion and did not know what to do, by this time Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er were long gone.

Tang Shoufang said in an annoyed tone: "Second Miss, if you continue to let emotions guide you.....the entire clan will be ruined at your hands!"

Li Peiling suddenly said: "You don't need to concern yourselves about this affair. I promise you they won't escape, we will take care of this problem."

Li Peiling always had a very high status in the Tang Clan, she hardly gave her opinion about any matters normally. This was the first time she actively participated into a Tang Clan affair, her opinion was respected and Tang Shoufang had no choice but to comply.

He said: "Very well, I will leave this matter to you." He lead the other disciples to the other side and hoped to catch Yu Peiyu there. Li Peiling and Tang Qi lead the maids to pursue Yu Peiyu.

Because Yu Peiyu was unfamiliar with the Tang Manor, he soon found himself trapped, up ahead was a mountain cliff and some old houses.

He turned around, he did not want to fight the Tang disciples but he had no choice now.

Tang Qi and Li Peiling stood there watching them from afar, she did not order an attack. She just made a gesture to Yu

Peiyu telling him to run.

Yu Peiyu was a bit surprised but he pulled Zhu Lei'Er along and entered one of the houses.

It was a very nice decorated house, with a lot antique furniture. Zhu Lei'Er said: "It is strange already that Yang Zijiang would help us, but even Miss Tang Qi saved us now. What is going on here?"

Yu Peiyu said: "There are many strange and unpredictable things in life."

Zhu Lei'Er now coldly said: "Yes, for instance that Tang Lin would frame you. Did you expect that?"

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply and did not answer her.

Tang Lin was still unconscious and he put her on a chair, he was looking around and moving furniture. Zhu Lei'Er wondered what he was looking for and asked: "What is this place and what are you looking for?"

Yu Peiyu said: "This is the study of Tang Wushuang."

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit shocked and said: "Tang Qi gave us time to escape, what are we doing in the study of Tang Wushuang."

Yu Peiyu said: "Looking for a way out of here."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What do you mean?"

Before Yu Peiyu could answer a wall suddenly opened, the secret tunnel.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "There really is a secret passage here. Tang Lin said you came in via this tunnel, she really knows how to tell a good lie."

Yu Peiyu just smiled wryly, he picked up Tang Lin again and entered the secret tunnel.

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "It seems that you cannot bear to leave her for moment, you really should use a rope to tie you two together."

Yu Peiyu turned around and said sternly: "This is not the place to argue! Could you be quiet!"

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned, tears started to flow from her eyes. Yu Peiyu had never talked to her that way before.

After walking for some time, Yu Peiyu sighed: "We can talk now, what did you want to say earlier."

Zhu Lei'Er kept quiet.

Yu Peiyu said: "Miss Tang started all of this, she is also the only one who can clear my name. So I cannot let her die and have to take her along with me."

Zhu Lei'Er still did not speak.

Yu Peiyu said: "I know you did not harm her with your internal strenght but I think you must have used one of your poisons on her. If you understand what I mean that she is the only who can help me, please give me the antidote."

Zhu Lei'Er was still silent, Yu Peiyu frowned and asked: "Why won't you talk?"

Zhu Lei'Er used her finger to point at him and afterwards pointed at her own mouth.

Yu Peiyu smiled: "You're a grown woman, why is that you still behave like a little girl."

When she heard Yu Peiyu's words about her being a grown woman she laughed and said: "You told me to keep quiet, I'm always very obedient."

Yu Peiyu said: "Could you please give her the antidote?"

Zhu Lei'Er felt sad again and tears were welling up again: "Why do you keep asking me to save her? You're only concerned about her, why won't you ask whether I am alright. She uses poison too."

Yu Peiyu said gently: "Although the Tang disciples use poison too, but....."

Zhu Lei'Er interrupted him: "But what? I'm a woman of poison in your eyes. Everyone I touch will be poisoned, right? Why aren't you poisoned yet?"

Yu Peiyu was a bit surprised and shocked to see her this upset and said: "When I saw that Silver Blossom slapped you she was poisoned. And when that disciple of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect pinched you he was poisoned too. So I thought....."

Zhu Lei'Er loudly said: "But Miss Tang Lin did not slap me or pinch me, did she? If I cannot control the poison in my body, third uncle would be dead for a very long time!"

Yu Peiyu said: "So she is not poisoned?"

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Do you think I'm a fool? I know she is vital for the restoration of your reputation!"

Yu Peiyu sighed and said gently: "I am most sorry. I saw that Miss Tang was still not awake so....."

Zhu Lei'Er did not respond to him and walked to Tang Lin and said coldly: "Miss Tang, you're not only a great liar but also a great actress. If you don't wake up now I will tear the clothes of your body."

Tang Lin immediately opened her eyes.

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Do you understand now what is going on? She did not want to answer your questions so she pretended to be unconscious. Intelligent man, stop accusing innocent people!"

Yu Peiyu did not retort back, he accept every word she threw at him because he felt too he deserved it.

Zhu Lei'Er turned to Tang Lin again and scoffed: "Miss Tang, can't you walk and stand on your own now? Or do you like to be in the arms of young master Yu?"

Tang Lin's pale face became red of embarrassment, she said softly: "You...you sealed the acupoints in my leg.....I can't walk and stand....."

Zhu Lei'Er said calmly: "Occasionally I like to tease people too. Why is it that you are allowed to wrongfully accuse people and I not."

Tang Lin was very angry but did not speak. Yu Peiyu put her down and unsealed her acupoints.

Yu Peiyu sighed and asked Tang Lin: "Miss Tang, why did you frame me for the death of your father?"

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "You can accuse me, she accused you.....You're made for each other."

Yu Peiyu was very bemused by Zhu Lei'Er, Yu Peiyu knew that he couldn't tell Zhu Lei'Er to keep quiet now. He learnt that he would better not tell woman to stay quiet again, otherwise they might nag on the matter for the rest of his life.

Tang Lin stayed quiet this time.

Yu Peiyu said softly: "Miss Tang, I know you have a reason to frame me. I know you're not liar, please tell me what is wrong here?"

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Because she is not a liar her words make a heavy impact on people. If she was a infamous liar would her words carry any weight?"

Every time Yu Peiyu asked Tang Lin a question, she would stay quiet and not reply. Zhu Lei'Er would continue to give sarcastic comments.

Yu Peiyu stayed calm and asked Tang Lin earnestly again: "I think you must have a very good reason for telling that lie. Please tell me why, I will not blame you."

Zhu Lei'Er sneered: "Maybe her real lover killed Tang Wushuang and to cover up for her lover she implicated you."

That sounded like a reasonable deduction.

Yu Peiyu asked Tang Lin: "Do you know who the killer is?"

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Of course she knows, but the way you ask her she won't say a word."

She walked in front of Tang Lin and sternly asked: "Tell me, who killed Tang Wushuang? If you don't speak I will....."

Suddenly a voice from their backs said: "I killed Tang Wushuang."

They saw a figure in a white long dress, but they could not see clearly how it was.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who are you?"

That person walked up holding a torch, when she walked closer, Yu Peiyu exclaimed with surprise: "You?"

That person sighed: "Yes, it was me."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I never guessed it would be you."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Why are you telling us this? Are you planning on silencing us?"

That person said coldly: "If I wanted to kill you, I wouldn't have saved you earlier."

The killer was the second daughter of Tang Wushuang, Tang Qi.

Tang Lin sobbed: "Second sister, why did you come? I don't want to live anymore. Let me take the blame for everything."

Tang Qi said sadly: "I know you're a good girl, you sacrificed yourself for me. And I....."

Tang Lin cried: "I know you had to protect our clan, that is why you had to kill him."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "Both of you are honourable, but what did Yu Peiyu do to deserve this?"

Tang Qi said deeply: "We know that we should not have dragged young master Yu into this. But this is a very delicate matter which might endanger our entire clan."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Don't we at least deserve to know the truth now?"

Tang Qi said: "That is why I am here, I'm going to tell you the truth."

She paused for a moment before saying: "You must be wondering why I killed my father?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That thought did cross our minds."

Tang Qi said: "I hope both of you could keep this secret safe."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You still doubt Yu Peiyu now?"

Tang Qi said: "I know that young master Yu is a true gentleman and can be trusted."

She added: "The man I killed was not my father."

She looked at Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er and expected them to be shocked.

Zhu Lei'Er said calmly: "This is not a secret, we knew that already."

Tang Qi was the one who was shocked now and asked: "How...how did you know?"

Yu Peiyu nodded and said: "We know."

He was never a very talkative person but with Zhu Lei'Er around now he even had less chance to speak. But he did not mind, in fact he liked to listen to her voice.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "It is not strange that we know it, but it is most strange that you would know that this man is an imposter."

Tang Qi smiled wryly: "This is a secret of our clan, only I knew of it. It is most strange that you would know it too."

Zhu Lei'Er added: "We even know that this Tang Wushuang used to be an old stable-boy."

Tang Qi repeated with surprise: "Stable-boy?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Yes, he is a lackey of Yu Fanghe. We eavesdropped on his plans in Apricot Pavillion."

Tang Qi was totally confused now and did not know she was talking about.

Yu Peiyu sighed: "This is a very confusing affair. But Miss Tang, most important is that Yu Fanghe is behind all of this."

Tang Qi said with surprise: "The chancellor of Wulin? Old Mr. Yu?"

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said: "Yes."

Tang Qi asked: "He is involved in this matter? How?"

Yu Peiyu said: "He wants to take over control over your clan, he abducted the real old master Tang. And replaced him with an imposter who looks identical to the real old master Tang. Fortunately we discovered this plot of theirs."

Zhu Lei'Er added: "We came here to expose this plan of theirs."

Tang Qi was dumbfounded for a minute before she started to laugh loudly.

Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu looked at each other and wondered why she was laughing.

Tang Qi stopped laughing and said softly: "The net of heaven has large meshes, but it lets nothing through. All our planning has been in vain."

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and asked: "What do you mean?"

Tang Qi said earnestly: "To tell you the truth, my father passed away more than ten years ago."

Yu Peiyu was shocked and called out: "Ten....ten years ago.....but that is not possible...."

Tang Qi said: "When my father was seriously ill years ago, something terrible happened in the Wulin of Sichuan province our clan was also implicated into this matter. The only way to avoid this calamity was with the fame of our late father, our father knew that when he died chaos would erupt again. So before he died he found someone to impersonate himself."

She smiled lightly now and continued: "My father found a distant cousin of him who looked very alike him. This distant

uncle of mine was not a stable-boy and we used the art of disguise to make him look more alike. Furthermore if someone would see something different we would say that because of the illness my father's looks had changed a bit."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "So that means the old master Tang I saw was your distant uncle."

Yu Peiyu now understood why the Tang Wushuang he met was such a coward and lacked the grandeur of a true leader of a famous Wulin family. And he began to understand why that Tang Wushuang betrayed him.

Tang Qi said: "That uncle of mine was never an intelligent and wise man, so before my father died he instructed me that he could never be put in charge of the Tang Clan. He could only be my puppet and if he tried to usurp the power of our clan my father...my father ordered to kill him immediately."

She sighed: "This was my father's final wish, in order to preserve and protect my clan I had to stay single."

Yu Peiyu felt sad for her, because it was not easy to sacrifice your own happiness for the fate of the family.

Tang Qi said: "For all these years my uncle listened to me and never tried to do anything on his own. However this time when he returned he issued some orders on his own without my consent. Obeying my father's final wishes, I had to kill him."

She paused before sighing: "But it is a surprise to hear that there is an imposter impersonating the fake.....It seems that the Jade Emperor holds many strange surprises for us mortals."

Zhu Lei'Er was dumbfounded too and said softly: "What an incredible secret! It is not easy to protect the fame and reputation of a Wulin family."

Tang Qi said tragically: "Everyone just sees the glory of our clan, but they do not realise how many tears, blood there

really is behind our glory.”

Tang Qi started to weep too, talking about this brought back a lot unhappy thoughts. Yu Peiyu realised that every time she was about to get married her fiancés would die under mysterious ways. Was it coincidence, or is there more to that it meets the eye. Yu Peiyu shivered at the thought, he also understood that Tang Qi was a most unfortunate woman.

Glory and a prestigious reputation were not easy to preserve, how much tears, blood and bodies were used to preserve those two concepts. Is it worth it, Yu Peiyu wondered.

Zhu Lei’Er asked sadly: “Does Tang Yue know about this?”

Tang Qi said: “No, he doesn’t.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “No wonder, he would.....”

She did not finish her sentence, Tang Yue was dead there would be no use to reveal his faults.

Yu Peiyu looked at her and his eyes were filled with praise. She was a very kind and considerate young woman, sometimes she would say the wrong things at the wrong time. But a lot of people make that same mistake.

Tang Qi said: “Only my uncle and I knew about this, my father felt that my other brothers and sisters were still too young to know about this, so my father decided not to tell them anything.”

Yu Peiyu sighed, he knew if Tang Yue knew about this he would not help Yu Fanghe to create another Tang Wushuang.

That distant uncle was a mere puppet for years, he had enough of that role as a symbol. That is why he made a deal with Yu Fanghe, he wanted to boast his status in the clan. He betrayed Yu Peiyu to Yu Fanghe, but he remained loyal to the Tang Clan and did not reveal a word of this to Yu Fanghe.

Yu Peiyu sighed: “No matter what, your uncle stayed loyal to the Tang Clan till the end.”

Tang Qi added: "Nobody knows the difficulty members of a Wulin family have to endure, the difficulty of protecting the fame established by generations of hard work."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "I used to admire people from big famous Wulin families, but now...."

She too had a burden, being the daughter of the Lady Zhu from the Palace of Enchantment was not an easy position.

After some time Zhu Lei'Er asked: "How did third Miss Tang know about this secret?"

Tang Qi sighed: "She only knew that night when that imposter was killed. That night she did go to the room of Tang....Tang Wushuang. She did stop outside and did overhear a conversation between that Tang Wushuang and the killer. Needless to say that killer was I."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "When she saw you killing that Tang Wushuang, you had no choice but to tell her about that family secret."

Tang Qi smiled wryly: "That is what happened."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That is why I thought it was strange you wouldn't tell the truth earlier."

Tang Qi said: "We did not know that our secret contained so many other concealed plots in it. And we did not know that our uncle was dead now and was replaced by someone else."

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly scoffed: "But why did you need to sacrifice Yu Peiyu in order to protect the fame of your clan?"

Tang Qi just sighed, she did not know what to say.

Zhu Lei'Er turned to Tang Lin and said: "Third Miss Tang, there is something I would like to ask you?"

Tang Lin had lowered her head and did not dare to face anyone.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why did you have to implicate Yu Peiyu? You could have picked anyone else you knew? But why him?"

Tang Lin started to cry again.

Tang Qi sighed: "Why do you have to force her to tell the truth, I will tell you why."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Is it because she was acting on your instructions?"

Tang Qi sneered: "If she acted on my orders she would not have implicated Yu Peiyu. Although he is the most handsome young man I have ever seen, but I have no interest in him at all."

She was angered by Zhu Lei'Er attitude and retorted back in an unfriendly tone.

Zhu Lei'Er smiled now: "Wonderful! That is exactly what I want. I want every woman in this world to treat Yu Peiyu like you treat him."

Tang Qi looked at her and all her irritation vanished, she realised that Zhu Lei'Er was just a sweet innocent young woman who still had to mature.

She smiled a bit before sighing: "It is because my little sister has met young master Yu once and....."

Tang Lin raised her head and shouted with anxiety: "Sister....sister...how can you....."

Tang Qi said gently: "There is nothing to feel embarrassed about, it is perfectly normal for a young woman to fall in love with a handsome young man."

Tang Lin blushed now.

Zhu Lei'Er said with a bit of indignation: "You mean she framed Yu Peiyu because she loved him. That is some way to show her affection and love for him."

Tang Qi said: "She is deeply in love with Yu Peiyu, when she found out that he was married to you she was heartbroken. And the tragedy of our family also saddened her beyond words."

She looked at Zhu Lei'Er and added: "Love and hate are very close to each other, the other side of love is hate. Would you not do the same thing if you were in her position?"

Zhu Lei'Er looked sad and looked at Yu Peiyu for a moment before saying softly: "I might be even more vicious....."

Tang Qi said: "Only young master Yu has enough power to convince those people."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why?"

Tang Qi said: "She was punished once before because of young master Yu. Fortunately because nothing serious happened, otherwise she would have been executed some time ago for breaking an ancient family rule."

Now, Yu Peiyu asked: "Did she take Silver Blossom into that cave because of me?"

Tang Qi smiled sadly: "Young master, you remember that incident. Because of that incident you should forgive her."

Yu Peiyu looked at the weeping Tang Lin, he did not know what to say.

Zhu Lei'Er said softly: "I would like to apologize to you, initially I hated you for what you did. But now I feel sorry for you."

Tang Lin turned around and screamed: "I don't need your apology, I don't need your compassion. I hate you.....I hate you....."

She wanted to run away but because her acupoints were sealed too long she still could not move and soon fell down again.

Zhu Lei'Er bit her lip and smiled sadly: "You do not have to hate me. I tell everyone that I am his wife, but I'm just saying that to lie to myself. He only loves Miss Lin Daiyu, you and I are very much similar to each other. Much more than you think."

Zhu Lei'Er started to weep too, Tang Qi looked at them and said softly: "What a misfortune.....what a misfortune."

She raised her head and said coldly to Yu Peiyu: "Young master Yu, you really do know how to make young women sad, don't you?"

Yu Peiyu stared in front of him looking pale and said softly: "I have made so many women sad and miserable....."

He kept repeating these words over and over again to himself. But no matter how many times he would repeat it, Tang Qi will not feel sorry for him.

Tang Qi helped Tang Lin up and said: "We have said and explained that was necessary now, you can leave now."

She suddenly really disliked Yu Peiyu and wanted nothing do with him anymore.

This thirty odd years old single woman especially hated heartless men, in her eyes Yu Peiyu was a heartless man.

In her heart she knew Yu Peiyu was not to blame too, but she could not control her hate towards men. She did not hate Yu Peiyu but hate men in general.

Zhu Lei'Er walked over to Tang Lin and asked: "Miss Tang, are you planning on telling everyone about this secret?"

Tang Qi said: "No."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What is the use of telling us all of this?"

Tang Qi said: "No use at all."

Zhu Lei'Er said anxiously: "But if you don't everyone will think that Yu Peiyu really killed old master Tang."

Tang Qi said coldly: "Does a heartless man like him deserve your concern?"

She turned around and walked away not looking at them again.

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned and wanted to chase them, Yu Peiyu pulled her back and said: "Let them go."

Zhu Lei'Er turned around and asked loudly: "Nevermind? How can you let them go like this? You like to be called a murderer for the rest of your life?"

Yu Peiyu looked sadly and smiled: "I have been wronged of so many crimes, an extra one does not matter."

Zhu Lei'Er stamped her feet and said angrily: "I really don't know what is wrong with you! If people wrongfully accuse you, you're not angry or anxious at all! But when people come up for you, you act indifferently!"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "You think I'm a heartless man too, why do you care for me at all."

Chapter 33 : Competing In Wit

Yang Zjiang's house was indeed quite close after walking for about an hour or so they saw a thatched house. There was smoke coming out of the chimney.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Your wife is very diligent, preparing breakfast for you already."

Yang Zijiang said: "That is because she knows we have guests."

When Zhu Lei'Er heard the words of Yu Peiyu she was stunned, she started to weep again and said: "Am I wrong? Should I not have said those words? There is only Lin Daiyu in your heart? Am I wrong in that?"

Yu Peiyu did not say a word.

After crying for some time Zhu Lei'Er continued: "Maybe I am really wrong. I like to cry and I talk too much. I say the wrong things to anger you, why won't you continue without me."

Yu Peiyu did not say a thing, he just gently took her hand and pulled her along with him. Sometimes not talking is the best method.

Yu Peiyu knew that they would come out at that abandoned temple on the other side of this secret tunnel. That is where Yu Fanghe captured Yu Fanghe and killed Tang Yu. That is also the place where Yu Peiyu met Guo Pianxian for the first time, he also remembered that poor young girl Zhong Jing. What happened to them? Are they still alive?

He also thought of Silver Blossom and her cruel punishment for her wicked ways. The images of Golden Blossom, Iron Blossom, Jin Yanzi appeared in front of him.

Of course, he could not forget about Lin Daiyu. Yu Peiyu sighed, he was thinking: The unhappy events they encountered, are those really my fault?

Every girl he met so far had met with tragedy, why?

It is said that beautiful women bring disaster with them, does that go for handsome men too.

Yu Peiyu did not know whether he should laugh loudly or cry sadly now. He held on to another sad girl now and the two of them stayed quiet and continued to walk.

Yu Peiyu gently pushed the fake wall aside and was welcomed by laughter: "The two of you are late. I have been waiting for some time now."

Yu Peiyu pulled Zhu Lei'Er behind him and backed backwards with a few steps.

Zhu Lei'Er exclaimed: "Yang Zijiang, why do you keep following us!"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Perhaps it is fate that we should meet again."

He was sitting on the floor, with a bottle of wine and plate of steamed vegetables on his leg. There was a candle and flint next to him on the floor.

He smiled: "I took this plate from the Tang Manor, although it is cold but it still quite tasty. Come join me and drink some."

Yu Peiyu just looked at him for a moment and said with a smile: "Thank you."

Yu Peiyu sat down and poured himself a cup of wine and drank without hesitation. Yang Zijiang looked at him and laughed: "Brother Yu, your martial arts are passable and you're quite handsome although I am not bad looking myself. But what I truly admire is your ability to stay calm and tranquil no matter what situation, that is something I cannot do myself."

He turned to Zhu Lei'Er now and smiled: "Miss Zhu, don't worry there is no poison in the wine. I know many ways to kill but using poison is not one of them."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him casually and said: "I just know one method in killing and that is to use poison. I can randomly use it and my victims won't even know what hit them. When they find out that they are poisoned it is too late and have no idea who killed them."

She now smiled to Yang Zijiang: "Maybe there is poison in your cup already now."

If the same words would have been said by someone else Yang Zijiang would laugh in that person's face. But the speaker now was the daughter of the once dreaded Lady Zhu of the Palace of Enchantment, that made everything different.

Yang Zijiang looked at his cup for awhile and smiled: "If there really was poison you wouldn't tell me, would you?"

Zhu Lei'Er said sweetly: "Why won't you drink up?"

Yang Zijiang was a bit stunned and did not drink the wine. Even though he was quite sure there was no venom in it.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Aren't you supposed to be a very courageous man?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Normally I am, but when I'm provoked I turn into a coward."

Zhu Lei'Er took his cup from his hands and poured the wine into the cup of Yu Peiyu, she smiled to Yu Peiyu: "It is pity to waste such a good wine, would you like to drink it?"

Yu Peiyu smiled and drank the wine without hesitation.

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "There was no poison at all in the wine, see! You must feel awfully awkward now."

Yang Zijiang stayed the same without looking awkward and laughed: "Being a bit cautious in life doesn't hurt at all. Furthermore the host should allow the guest to drink first."

He took the bottle and poured another cup for himself and said: "Now it is my turn."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "By the way there is no poison on the cup."

Yang Zijiang looked at his cup for a moment and smiled: "I have had too much already, I will pass."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled sweetly: "When I told you that there was poison you wouldn't believe, now I am saying that there isn't poison you don't believe either. What does it take to convince you?"

Yang Zijiang said: "No matter what you say I won't drink now."

He put down his cup and said softly to himself: "I saved her life, but she ruined my mood to drink. I think I won't save anyone anymore in the future."

Zhu Lei'Er now said sternly: "Nobody told you to save us! You killed Tang Yue, caused Golden Blossom to commit suicide and you also murdered Iron Blossom. Why won't you kill us too?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Does killing you really please you?"

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Well, you're smart enough not to mess with us. Or else you might find out we're not that easy to deal with."

Yang Zijiang said: "I select my victims on basis whether they deserve to die, not on whether they are easy to deal with or not."

He looked seriously now and added: "If a certain person can betray his father, brothers and sisters just to be with the woman he loves, does that man deserve to live?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You and your friends forced, tricked him to betray his family!"

Yang Zijiang asked: "Can I successfully force or trick you to harm Yu Peiyu?"

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "Of course not!"

Yang Zijiang said: "You see what I mean, if you're determined about something nobody can force you to do anything. If Tang Yue was really loyal to his family he wouldn't betray his family, even if we promised him the entire world."

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit taken by his remark but soon said: "How about Golden Blossom? Why did you...."

Yang Zijiang interrupted: "Golden Blossom committed suicide because Tang Yue was dead. I did not touch her that day when Tang Yue died, there are plenty of dumb women like Golden Blossom in the world who commit suicide that easily. Does that mean I am responsible for their deaths?"

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "How easy you shift the responsibility away from yourself? Does that mean you are a good man?"

Yang Zijiang said: "I wouldn't dare to say that. But I will never kill an innocent man."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him for a moment and continued: "What about Iron Blossom? Why did you kill her?"

Yang Zijiang answered: "Iron Blossom? Who told you I killed her?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I did."

Yang Zijiang said: "Did you actually see me kill him? Have you seen her body? How do you know she is dead?"

Zhu Lei'Er sneered: "Irrelevant! I know you had something to do with her disappearance. She is probably dead."

Yang Zijiang said: "If she isn't dead?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "If...if she is still alive, I will swallow this bottle of green liquor."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "You cannot swallow this bottle. If people see you they will wonder why this young girl is looking that green."

Zhu Lei'Er said angrily: "Who says I look green?"

Yang Zijiang said calmly: "You are already a green eyed monster, how would you look like if you swallow this entire bottle of green wine."

Zhu Lei'Er was utterly dumbfounded by this man, she did not know what to say to him. She stared at him angrily and in the end she just laughed: "I lose....you're one formidable shrew. I shiver at the thought if you were actually a woman."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Brother Yang, I take it you're here for another reason except debating with Miss Zhu."

Yang Zijiang was a bit taken by Yu Peiyu's remark, Zhu Lei'Er tried so hard to dumbfound him with no luck. But Yu Peiyu managed to stun him with one mere remark.

Yang Zijiang laughed now: "Now I understand the saying Barking dogs don't bite! I will now look at brother Yu with a new perspective."

Yu Peiyu just kept smiling friendly.

Yang Zijiang now looked serious and said: "I am here, because I know brother Yu is a true gentleman."

Yu Peiyu answered: "You're too kind."

Yang Zijiang said: "I really admire your tranquility and"

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "Get on with what you want to say, he does not need your flattery."

Yang Zijiang smiled dryly and said: "I just want to ask brother Yu one question, I hope you can tell me the truth."

Yu Peiyu said: "Let me hear that question first."

Yang Zijiang said: "I just want to know who killed that Tang Wushuang. Was it really Miss Tang Qi? What was her motive? Did she see through his disguise? And how did you come to know about this?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "That is not one question, but five."

Yang Zijiang looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Very well, I would like to ask brother Yu to answer my five questions."

Yu Peiyu looked earnestly and said: "Brother Yang, since you have asked me this sincerely I cannot refuse your request. However....."

Yang Zijiang asked: "However what?"

Yu Peiyu did not speak anymore and just shook his head.

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Don't you understand? He cannot tell you the truth so the best way is to keep quiet. Now I know what the best method is in dealing with shrews."

Yang Zijiang sternly said: "You refuse to tell me!"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What are you planning to do?"

Yang Zijiang looked angry and pale now, Zhu Lei'Er was getting nervous and knew that if he attacked now it would not be easy to ward off his attacks.

However Yang Zijiang smiled: "If that is the case, forget I ever asked."

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit surprised and said: "Why so friendly all of a sudden?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I really want to become friends with brother Yu and I hope he can join me for a cup of wine in my home."

Zhu Lei'Er said with surprise: "You have a home too?"

Yang Zijiang laughed: "What is so strange about having a place of my own. Most people do have their own homes."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Where is your house?"

Yang Zijiang said: "It is quite near and my wife is preparing a few dishes, I think, as we speak."

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised again and said: "You have a wife?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "What is so strange about that?"

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "I'm totally confused now. You never ceases to amaze me, I really want to meet your wife. I wonder why she would marry a strange man like you."

Yang Zijiang smiled to Yu Peiyu: "Does brother Yu have the time now?"

Yu Peiyu just laughed lightly, Zhu Lei'Er interrupted: "I know he is very interested in meeting your wife too."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Excellent, I think brother Yu won't defy the wishes of Miss Zhu?"

Yu Peiyu's curiosity was also aroused, he began to see the different side of Yang Zijiang.....the funny and sincere side of him.

Yang Zijiang's house was indeed quite close after walking for about an hour or so they saw a thatched house. There was smoke coming out of the chimney.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Your wife is very diligent, preparing breakfast for you already."

Yang Zijiang said: "That is because she knows we have guests."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "How does she know we would come today?"

Yang Zijiang said seriously: "If I would not come home with two esteemed guests, she won't allow me to enter the house."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why? Does she know us?"

Yang Zijiang smiled and shook his head.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why won't you answer?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I'm just following brother Yu's example of not talking."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "I will see for myself anyway."

The surroundings were very idyllic and nice, at first sight there was nobody strange or dangerous about this place.

When they entered the house, they saw that the table was spreaded already and there was food on the table.

Zhu Lei'Er sat down and started to eat, she had not eaten for an entire day and was really quite hungry.

She smiled: "Your wife really knows how to cook. You are very fortunate to have found such a caring wife."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I am afraid that these dishes will not be to your liking."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Where is Madame Yang, if I may ask?"

Yang Zijiang said: "I think she must be in the kitchen preparing some dishes."

There was noise coming from the kitchen, Yu Peiyu said: "There are so many dishes already here, we wouldn't dare to impose on you."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "She really wants her guests to taste her food."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Tell Madame Yang to join us."

Yang Zijiang said: "Very well."

It was very strange that these three people would sit down at the same table and eat together. One was a misunderstood young heroic gentleman fighting for a noble goal. The second one was a strange young man with mysterious intentions and third one was the daughter of the late Lady Zhu.

If anyone would see them here together they would probably be so scared to even stay to watch them. Because anyone of these three are formidable characters in the present realm of martial arts.

Yang Zijiang smiled: "It is time that you would show yourself to our guests."

A voice very clear and pretty said: "After cooking these prawns I will come out."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That voice sounds so familiar."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Can't you tell by the voice?"

Zhu Lei'Er shook her head and said: "There are too many additional noises in the kitchen I cannot hear clearly."

At this time a young woman walked out of the kitchen and she had a plate of prawns in her hand.

Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu were stunned to see this woman here.

The wife of Yang Zijiang is Iron Blossom.

They were expecting to be in a surprise but this was even beyond their wildest dreams.

Iron Blossom smiled sweetly: "I hope you won't mind if it is not that good."

Yu Peiyu stuttered: "You...you're too mo...modest, Mada....Madame Yang."

Although he always remained calm and clear under the most dire circumstances but this even shocked him and he had no idea what to say. The only thing he could think of was to put something in his mouth to prevent himself from saying the wrong things.

When Iron Blossom heard Yu Peiyu calling her [Madame Yang], she blushed.

At this time Zhu Lei'Er loudly asked: "You're actually married to him?"

Iron Blossom smiled: "Well, I have to get married eventually."

Zhu Lei'Er shook her head and sighed: "Why would you like to marry a strange character like him."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Everyone to his own! I mean if every woman has the same taste like Miss Zhu then brother Yu would have a lot of female admirers."

He added: "I wonder if this wine is as good as the green wine of earlier."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "You don't have to make me angry, I lose I am jealous little girl. I know that."

Suddenly they heard horses galloping this way, Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Are you expecting guests?"

Yang Zijiang said: "It seems so."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "They must come from afar."

Yang Zijiang said: "Yes, I think so."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who are those people?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "How do you know I would know these people?"

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Probably those fiendish friends of yours."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "How did you guess?"

The horses came closer and closer to the house of Yang Zijiang, Zhu Lei'Er looked at Yu Peiyu to see what his intentions were. But Yu Peiyu just smiled and did not say a thing.

Yang Zijiang loudly praised: "Yu Peiyu.....Yu Peiyu, I really admire your courage."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Thank you."

Yang Zijiang said: "Only you with extraordinary courage would dare to come to my home? Aren't you afraid I will sell you out to those men?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I love the surroundings here and I enjoyed Madame Yang's cooking. And I don't think you're the kind of man who will sell me out."

Yang Zijiang said: "You shouldn't blindly trust people, brother Yu."

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "If you wanted to harm me, you would have done so a long time ago. There is no need for all of this, is it?"

Yang Zijiang laughed: "You shouldn't trust me altogether! I'm not a good man."

Yu Peiyu said sincerely: "I think you are a decent person."

Zhu Lei'Er was very much bemused by this, one was self-reproaching the other was consoling him. Just half a day ago these two young men could be said were mortal enemies.

However Zhu Lei'Er still did not trust this Yang Zijiang. But it was too late, the horses stopped in front of Yang Zijiang's house. One of the riders called: "Is someone here?"

Yang Zijiang said: "You know I'm here, why pretend?"

One of the riders smiled friendly: "We wouldn't dare to barge into the home of young master Yang."

Yang Zijiang frowned and said: "Enough formalities, enter!"

Three men came in with three large boxes big enough to put in grown men.

One of the men walked in with a big smile, Zhu Lei'Er thought she had seen this man before. She remembered that she did see him with Yu Fanghe at her home and Yu Peiyu saw him with the entourage of Yu Fanghe watching Yu and Tang Wushuang playing go.

When he saw Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er his smile was gone.

Yang Zijiang asked: "Have you brought the things I want?"

One of the other men said: "Yes, it is in here."

Yang Zijiang said: "Are you sure?"

The man said: "Absolutely, we personally saw to it."

But they saw Yu Peiyu too and they did look at him with bad intentions in their eyes.

Yang Zijiang deliberately said loudly: "Oh! You have met each other before?"

The man stuttered: "Not...not...really."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Let me introduce you to each other."

He pointed to one of the man and said: "This is Mountain Splitting Sabre Song Gang. This is Tiger Subdueing Fists Zhao Qiang. It is said that they are famous martial artists."

Both Zhao Qiang and Song Gang said with a proud smile: "You're too kind."

Yang Zijiang coldly added: "In my opinion this mountain splitting sabre is only fit to chop wood and tiger subdueing fists can never subdue tigers. Even cats might be a problem."

Both Zhao Qiang and Song Gang were furious now but did not dare to show it and really tried their best to suppress their anger. Zhu Lei'Er was amused and felt pity for them.

Yang Zijiang pointed at the third man and said: "He has somewhat higher martial arts than these two. He is called The Jade Celestial Sabre Cao Ziyang. That sabre of his may not be able to slash through everything, but it might be worth a few taels of silver at the market. But his stances are not too bad."

Cao Ziyang looked pleased and smiled: "Thank you, young master Yang."

Yang Zijiang added: "But people also say that you're hypocritical fiend and your head is filled with dirty tricks. But you still have a long way to go if you want follow the footsteps of your ancestor Cao Cao."

Cao Ziyang was still smiling but his smile was not that radiant anymore.

Yu Peiyu said: "It is my pleasure to meet all of you."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Did the three of you came here to take our lives?"

Cao Ziyang smiled: "That really depends on young master Yang, we follow his commands."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Yang Zijiang.

Yang Zijiang said indifferently: "I don't care whom you want to kill, it really depends on your own abilities. Now there is food on the table, do you expect me to feed you personally."

Cao Ziyang, Zhao Qiang and Song Gang looked pleased now.

Zhu Lei'Er said angrily: "You really have intentions to betray us!"

Yang Zijiang sighed: "I said I was not a good person, but brother Yu wouldn't believe my words."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I won't blame anyone."

The three men looked at each other and Cao Ziyang said: "In that case...."

Iron Blossom interrupted: "I don't care what you want to do! But first you have to finish all the food on the table, I have stood in the kitchen the entire morning to cook this!"

Cao Ziyang said coldly: "Miss is...."

Yang Zijiang said: "Not Miss but Madame, Madame Yang. My wife."

Cao Ziyang immediately said with a smile: "I would love to eat Madame Yang's cuisine. I will eat all the dishes after business first."

Iron Blossom said: "That way the food will get cold, it won't be that good anymore. And if anyone of you would die that means that the mood will be ruined."

Yang Zijiang sighed: "I think it is best that you won't upset my wife. Furthermore upsetting women is not really a wise move, I suggest you would eat first."

Iron Blossom smiled: "Indeed, eat up. You might get some extra energy."

She went into the kitchen to get extra chopsticks, cups and bowls.

In the beginning Zhao Qiang and Song Gang ate with difficulty but because they were quite hungry now, so they soon ate heartily.

Yang Zijiang smiled: "If they fight as quick as they eat, brother Yu is in big trouble."

Iron Blossom gently slapped him and laughed: "What kind of host are you? You should urge them to eat some more."

The two of them were joking around as an ordinary couple much to the discomfort of Zhu Lei'Er. She originally thought that Iron Blossom was planning something for these three, but it did not seem like that.

Zhu Lei'Er saw with one look that there was no poison in the food or on the bowls, chopsticks and such.

Zhu Lei'Er felt very worried and wondered what to do, these three men were not a problem. But Yang Zijiang was.

She saw that Yu Peiyu was sitting and enjoying this meal very much, she asked with sarcasm: "Have you never eaten prawns before in your life?"

He drank a cup of wine and laughed: "I think I won't have the chance to eat such delicious prawns anymore in my life. I can't passed out on this opportunity."

Zhu Lei'Er almost jumped up with anger, but when she realised that after all this time Yu Peiyu now lost to Yu Fanghe she almost started to sob sadly.

Yu Peiyu put a piece of duck in her rice bowl and said gently: "Try this duck cooked with tea-leaves, it is a special dish famous only in Sichuan province. Not as good as Beijing duck in my opinion, but not bad either."

She quietly ate the duck, it tasted very good but she could not really enjoy it. In fact to her it tasted bitter.

Yang Zijiang laughed: "It seems it is a wise choice to marry a woman who can cook wonderfully. Miss Zhu, you really should learn how to cook."

Zhu Lei'Er said hatefully: "I think you have married the wrong woman."

Yang Zijiang asked: "Why do you say that?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "The prawns are in my opinion not very good."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Next time I would love to taste your cookery Miss Zhu."

Zhu Lei'Er coldly said: "There will be time for that soon enough."

She suddenly asked: "What is that you and your lackeys want from Yu Peiyu anyway?"

Yang Zijiang said: "The chancellor went to the Family Li Village to look for a certain object, but he couldn't find it. He was also surprised to find out that both of you were alive and not killed in the fire, so he thought that that object might be in your hands."

Cao Ziyang kept coughing the entire time as to remind Yang Zijiang not to reveal any secrets to these people.

Yang Zijiang ignored his coughing and continued: "Besides chancellor Yu has gone through great difficulty to investigate the antecedents of brother Yu, but in vain. Could brother Yu just be like the Sun Wukong, exploded from a rock?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "But the antecedents of brother Yang are also very mysterious."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Maybe you don't know, but at least the chancellor knows."

Yu Peiyu just nodded.

Yang Zijiang said: "You're very mysterious, your martial arts are good. And you keep giving the chancellor problems, it is naturally that he wants to get rid of you."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "The chancellor has a too high of an opinion of me."

Cao Ziyang, Zhao Qiang and Song Gang turned pale, Iron Blossom looked at her husband with love.

Zhu Lei'Er took advantage of this opportunity to put poison on the plate of ribs, she was a great user of poison and nobody saw a thing.

However nobody touched the plate of ribs, she was so anxious. She deliberately picked a rib and ate it, she softly said: "Very good. Not too salty and not too spicy."

But again none of the people touched the plate of ribs, Yu Peiyu smiled: "I would like taste it, since you say it is that good."

Those who are supposed to eat it are not eating, those who really must not eat this are going to eat it.

Zhu Lei'Er was almost going mad and quickly used her chopsticks to prevent Yu Peiyu from eating, she pouted: "Don't eat those greasy things, aren't you afraid of becoming fat. I hate men with big bellies."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Some men are detestable even without big bellies, take for instance brother Cao here. I can't stand him and he is as skinny as one can be."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled to him: "Why aren't you eating?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I'm Muslim, I am not allowed to eat pork."

Zhu Lei'Er turned to Iron Blossom and smiled: "It is waste to leave such a delicious plate of ribs untouched."

Iron Blossom said: "I will feed it to the dogs later on."

Cao Ziyang initially wanted to pick a piece but when she heard the words of Iron Blossom, he put down his chopsticks and smiled: "I wanted to taste it, but I don't want to steal away the food of the dogs."

Zhu Lei'Er was furious but she couldn't force force them to eat those ribs, could she?

Cao Ziyang touched his belly and smiled: "I'm full, I can't eat another thing."

Yang Zijiang said casually: "Well now, you can do what you have to do now."

Cao Ziyang said with a smile: "I will help Madame Yang cleaning up the table."

Yang Zijiang said: "No need, I just love to hear the noise of breaking plate and bowls and such."

Cao Ziyang said: "In that case, please forgive us for being rude."

He looked at Song Gang and Zhao Qiang, he sinisterly smiled to Yu Peiyu: "I advise you to come with us peacefully."

All of three of them stood up and readied themselves.

Yang Zijiang pulled Iron Blossom back and smiled: "I don't want your new dress getting dirty."

Yu Peiyu stood up too and told Zhu Lei'Er: "This doesn't concern you either, go over there first."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "This isn't a new dress and I'm not afraid that it will get dirty."

She raised her palm and attacked Cao Ziyang, Cao expected that much and avoided that blow. He said with smile: "If you're not willing....."

Suddenly he broke out in spasms and fell down, Zhao Qiang and Song Gang followed his example and broke out in convulsions too.

In a moment all three of them were dead.

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Why all the charades after a good meal."

Iron Blossom said: "They should entertain us, after all I cooked a good meal for them."

Yang Zijiang sighed: "The silver moss really is something special....."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at him and exclaimed: "Silver moss?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Yes, only Silver Blossom is capable of turning the silver moss into a powerful poison."

This type of poison was often used by emperors, they would bestow this poison to concubines, ministers who have become expendable.

Together with the crane's red dot and the silver kiss, these are three most famous used poison in history.

Even Yu Peiyu has heard of this type of rare poison too and asked: "Was the poison in the wine?"

Iron Blossom answered: "Don't worry it was not in the wine nor in the food."

She picked up the cup Cao Ziyang used and smiled.

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Wonderful! The two of you are really made for each other! Both of you like to trick people."

She turned to Yu Peiyu and smiled: "It seems you were correct, they really had no bad intentions towards us."

Yang Zijiang said: "Not necessarily."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Well, if not why would you kill these three?"

Yang Zijiang said: "I killed them because I cannot stand them, if one day I cannot stand the both of you I will kill you too."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "You really are strange aren't you? Normal people like to hear people praise about themselves, only you like to be mocked."

Yang Zijiang said: "I am not a good man, I like it when people say that I am a fiend."

Iron Blossom laughed: "He got scolded a lot when he was young. If he isn't scolded for three days, he will get uncomfortable all of a sudden. That is why I married him, I like to scold people."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "You really are made for each other. I truly envy you."

Yang Zijiang said: "Well if you envy her, won't you be my wife too?"

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "I'm afraid not, and you have a wife already. Otherwise..."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "The more the merrier."

Iron Blossom laughed: "I wonder if he can put with two wives scolding him."

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "Unfortunately, I don't like to scold people."

Yang Zijiang said: "Oh! You're like me, you like to be scolded."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Here you go again, after just saying you're a decent man, now you're becoming all cheeky again."

Yang Zijiang said seriously: "I am not a decent man, if I was decent I would continue to carry out Yu Fanghe's orders and stay loyal to him."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "So in other words, if you kill us you are really a decent man."

Yang Zijiang said: "Not necessarily, I only have to seal your acupoints and put in these boxes and present you to Yu Fanghe."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at those boxes and thought she would easily fit in one of those boxes.

She asked: "What is in them?"

Yang Zijiang said: "It is a gift for Madame Hai Tang from Yu Fanghe."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What kind of gift?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Care to guess, Miss Zhu?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I am not Zhuge Liang, how should I know?"

Yang Zijiang said: "You have seen the contents of these boxes before...."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "May I guess?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Of course."

Yu Peiyu said: "I think there are two humans in the box, correct?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Hmm!"

Yu Peiyu continued: "A man and a woman?"

Yang Zijiang answered: "Hmm!"

Yu Peiyu said: "Guo Pianxian and Zhong Jing?"

Yang Zijiang looked at Yu Peiyu with amazement, he now sighed deeply: "No wonder Yu Fanghe wants to get rid of you. If you were my enemy I would also be restless."

Zhu Lei'Er exclaimed: "Is that Guo fellow really in here?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Yes, he is."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "How did he end up here?"

Yang Zijiang said: "He passed out by the smoke that day in the Family Li Village and someone found him and put him in the box."

Zhu Lei'Er walked over and wanted to take a look in the box, but Yang Zijiang quickly sat on the box and calmly said: "Only Madame Hai Tang is allowed to open this box."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who said that?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "The chancellor of Wulin."

Zhu Lei'Er exclaimed: "Ha! Now you listen to him."

Yang Zijiang said: "Hmm!"

Zhu Lei'Er said earnestly: "Yang Zijiang, tell us. Are you a friend of ours, or are you just another lackey of Yu Fanghe?"

Yang Zijiang asked: "What are the advantages of being your friend?"

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit stunned: "There are plenty advantages, I can't name so many at once."

Yang Zijiang laughed: "Shall I name them for you? One, you can join me during meals. Two, if I have nothing to do I can save you lot. Three.....hahahah there are too many to mention, but I would rather pass on these advantages if you don't mind."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "So you admit you're a lackey of Yu Fanghe."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I'm no lackey."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What do you mean?"

Yang Zijiang said: "I'm just me. I have no friends, and I am not any lackey. I just do what I like and please."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "So you act on your own interests."

Yang Zijiang said: "Absolutely correct! I like what you say."

Zhu Lei'Er was furious and did not know what to say.

Suddenly they could hear a carriage coming their way from afar.

Yang Zijiang said: "I don't have any friends, but I do have a lot guests all of a sudden."

He suddenly flew up and kicked those three bodies out into the backyard and returned to his seat in a flash.

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Are they hear to bring presents too? However those presents are probably not for you, you just have to safeguard them."

Zhu Lei'Er looked outside and saw that the driver of the carriage was a man with only one arm and he rode very quickly to the house of Yang Zijiang.

Chapter 34 : Shadows Of The Sabres And The Swords

“It is said that the legendary general Li’s blade techniques were unmatched throughout the analects of Wulin. Nobody could withstand his sabre, because every time he drew his sabre he became one with his weapon. People could only see his [stance] but not the essence and his sabre. In other words the stance is visual but the sabre is everywhere, that is why nobody could block his stances.”

Yu Peiyu said: “I too have heard about the tales of the famous general Li, many seniors have told me about his tale.”

Yang Zijiang smiled a bit: “Very much the same about you, your name was also be mentioned many times in the future.”

There was a large box on the carriage. Iron Blossom laughed.

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Why are you laughing?”

Iron Blossom giggled: “I’m just happy for finding a good husband like him.”

Zhu Lei’Er scoffed: “Don’t count your chicks before they hatch.”

Iron Blossom said: “I thought this is a funny sight.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “What is so funny?”

Iron Blossom said softly: “The famous hero Wang Yuluo is driving a carriage.”

Yang Zijiang said: “He just trying to make up for his mistakes.”

Iron Blossom said: “Mistakes?”

Yang Zijiang said: “Yes, he couldn’t even keep his eyes on Tang Yue and even let him escape. I should have chopped off

his other arm too.”

Wang Yuluo and the carriage came closer and when Wang Yuluo saw Yu Peiyu he turned pale, but immediately smiled friendly: “It is such a pleasant surprise to find you here, young master Yu.”

Iron Blossom smiled sweetly: “Do you just remember young master Yu, don’t you remember me anymore?”

Wang Yuluo exclaimed with anger: “The Three Magnificent Flower Ladies?!?”

Iron Blossom smiled: “Oh! You still remember me.”

Wang Yuluo looked at his missing arm and smiled evilly: “How can I forget your gratitude, Miss?”

Yang Zijiang said: “Not Miss. But Madame.”

Wang Yuluo looked at Yu Peiyu and said: “Madame Yu.”

Yang Zijiang smiled: “Not Madame Yu, but Madame Yang.”

Wang Yuluo was surprised but soon composed himself and said with a big smile: “Young master Yang, you forgot to invite me over for the ceremony. Congratulations!”

Wang Yuluo now entered the house, Yang Zijiang said: “We just finished the wedding banquet, there is still a plate of ribs which is untouched. If you don’t find this a bit too simple, you can consider that a sort of banquet itself.”

Yang Zijiang took out a bowl and a pair of chopsticks for Wang Yuluo, if Iron Blossom took out the bowl and chopsticks, Wang Yuluo would have been very suspicious. But he was quite surprised and happy to see that Yang Zijiang was attending him personally, he thanked him respectfully several times.

Wang Yuluo said: “It is a pity that there is only this plate of ribs left, but I still thank young master Yang for your generosity.”

Zhu Lei’Er was afraid he would not eat but strange enough Wang Yuluo started to eat without a hint of suspicion.

Wang Yuluo was normally a cunning man and facing such a strange situation he should even be more careful. But he really trusted Yang Zijiang, this must mean that Yang Zijiang was very close to Yu Fanghe and Yu Fanghe must have ordered Wang Yuluo and others to listen to Yang Zijiang's orders, instructions.

Yu Fanghe was a very intelligent man and knew how to use people, there must be a reason why he trusted Yang Zijiang that much. But the actions of Yang Zijiang were too strange and unpredictable. He is now even poisoning Wang Yuluo, why is he doing that?

What is his relationship to Yu Fanghe?

Yang Zijiang asked: "Have you brought the box?"

Wang Yuluo said: "Young master Yang, I will not dare to make any mistakes."

He drank a cup of wine and continued: "As instructed I went to see young master Hai, young master Hai ordered me to deliver the box to you. I did not even open the box to see."

Yang Zijiang asked: "Did young master Hai ask you to deliver any message?"

Wang Yuluo said: "Young master Hai said he discovered some suspicious people, he is going to investigate this matter. He won't be able to meet up with you for a few days."

Yang Zijiang was thinking for a moment before saying: "I'm very pleased about this. If you have any final wishes please tell me, I will take care of it for you."

Wang Yuluo turned pale and stuttered: "I....final wish...wishes..."

Yang Zijiang said casually: "You've taken a poison of the Palace of Enchantment, do you think you can continue to live?"

Wang Yuluo dropped his chopsticks and stood up and said: "Young....young master Yang, are...are you joking?"

Yang Zijiang looked earnestly and said coldly: "Who is joking with you?"

Wang Yuluo was trembling, he was looking awfully pale and kicked the table upside down, he shouted: "The chancellor has put so much trust in you! How dare you....you.....!"

He suddenly stopped talking and turned around struck his palm towards Zhu Lei'Er.

He knew he was no match for Yang Zijiang, that is why he attacked Zhu Lei'Er with everything he had in him. He knew he was going to die anyway, but he wanted at least one of these people to accompany him while he died.

The entire time he was looking at Yang Zijiang, nobody suspected he would attack Zhu Lei'Er. This attack of his was both lethal and vicious.

Zhu Lei'Er had little combat experience and was completely taken by surprise, it was too late for her to avoid this blow.

Yu Peiyu had already stepped between her and Wang Yuluo and used his own palm to accept the stance of Wang Yuluo.

When the two exchanged palms, they could hear a pats and Wang Yuluo flew back and landed on the floor with his back. However before he actually fell to the floor, the poison had already kicked in and he was dead when he landed they all saw that his face had turned silver.

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Brother Yu, I thought you were quite tired from the events of these past days. It amazes me that you even have such powerful internal energy in your exhausted state, I must evaluate your martial arts again."

Iron Blossom smiled: "Don't underestimate young master Yu, he has extraordinary strength unmatched in the realm."

Zhu Lei'Er had now composed herself again and asked: "What did he deliver anyway?"

She wanted to ask this question for some time now.

Yang Zijiang laughed: "If I stop you again, you will start a fight with me I think...."

He opened the box and Zhu Lei'Er took a look and called out: "What?"

The person in the chest was no other than Ji Lingfeng. Even Yu Peiyu was surprised to see her in this state.

She was unconscious and tied up with ropes, the normal ever so high and mighty Ji Lingfeng was defeated and tied up and put in a box.

Yang Zijiang asked: "Do you know her?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "Yes, I do."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "We're supposed to meet each other at Tang Manor, I was wondering why she did not show up. I never thought she would be captured by you."

Yu Peiyu said: "With her martial arts and intelligence, Wang Yuluo is certainly not a match for her. Who was it....."

Yang Zijiang interrupted: "Did you not hear him say that a certain young master Hai instructed him to deliver this chest to me?"

Zhu Lei'Er said with surprise: "Young master Hai? Do you mean Hai Dongqing?"

Yang Zijiang was a bit surprised and asked: "You know Hai Dongqing?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Of course I know him, but I'm surprised you know him too."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I knew him when I was just one years old."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "One years old? That means that you're...."

Yang Zijiang said: "He is my elder martial arts brother."

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit stunned in the beginning but after a moment she smiled: "No wonder both of you are so strange."

Both of you crawled out of the same....” She didn’t finish her sentence.

Yu Peiyu sighed: “I have seen the martial arts of brother Hai before, Miss Ji is not his match. But what kinds of grudges do you have with Miss Ji?”

Yang Zijiang said: “No grudges, only we have orders from Yu Fanghe to bring her back to Murder Manor.”

Zhu Lei’Er said with surprise: “Hai Dongqing is also working for Yu Fanghe?”

Yang Zijiang laughed: “Both of us crawled out of the same nest, so our objectives are pretty much the same.”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Since both of you are so loyal to Yu Fanghe, why did you kill Wang Yuluo?”

Yang Zijiang smiled: “Because of me.”

Suddenly he yelled: “Who is there?” His face changed.

The door was barged open and everyone felt a powerful wind blowing inside, Zhu Lei’Er saw a figure and thought who this person was with such incredible speed.

Zhu Lei’Er now saw who it was and smiled: “Speak of the devil.....”

But she did not finish her sentence because she saw that Hai Dongqing’s robe was drenched with blood. And he looked awfully pale.

Yang Zijiang did not speak, he immediately tore open Hai Dongqing’s robe to inspect and tend to his wounds. There were about 17, 18 wounds on his body, Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei’Er knew what Hai Dongqing was capable of and were shocked to see him in this state.

Yang Zijiang was also shocked and asked: “Who were responsible for this?”

He was certain that a group of people ambushed Hai Dongqing, because no man alone can injure Hai Dongqing like this.

Hai Dongqing gritted his teeth and said: "It...."

At this point he fainted, his wounds were very severe and his amazing tenacity was the only factor that prevented him from fainting a long time ago.

But now that he was in care of his friends he was completely exhausted and passed out.

Iron Blossom put Hai Dongqing in a chair and looked after his wounds, Yang Zijiang angrily said: "I will pursue these people to the corners of the world if I have to."

A voice from outside said: "Not necessary. The one you seek is already here."

The voice sounded sharp and cold, it made one feel most uncomfortable when you heard it.

A man appeared in front of the door, he looked quite handsome but somehow he had a very eerie, cold aura around him. Like his voice it made one very uncomfortable, he wore a black robe and had a red girdle with a moon curved sabre.

Yang Zijiang was shocked but soon composed himself and asked: "Were you responsible?"

That man smiled indifferently: "Yes, your martial arts brother was wounded by Shade*."

{*Note: Shade as in ghosts, ghouls etc.}

Yang Zijiang asked: "Shade? Are you Shade?"

That man laughed: "Yes."

Yang Zijiang said: "Excellent, tell your comrades to come out too!"

Shade laughed: "Shades do not need help when they kill."

Yang Zijiang exclaimed with surprise: "You alone were responsible for this?"

Shade smiled: "Only one Shade is enough."

Everyone was shocked because they knew that Hai Dongqing had superb martial arts, at this moment Zhu Lei'Er noticed that Yang Zijiang could stay very calm too in dangerous situations. He asked: "Who ordered you?"

Shade smiled: "Shade acted on nobody's orders."

Yang Zijiang asked: "What unsolved issues did you have with him?"

Shade smiled again: "Shade does not have any issues with him."

He did not use the word "I" but "Shade."

Yang Zijiang shouted: "Who are you?"

Shade recited: "The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, flowing through the universe."

This was the first line of the classical text Thousand-character Classic, but when Yang Zijiang heard that his entire face turned pale. Why did that mere sentence have so much impact on him.

Shade smiled: "Shade let him escape, because he hoped to he would lead Shade to you. Because you are Shade's next target."

Nobody saw when or how he drew his sabre but they could see that he was slashing towards Yang Zijiang's throat. A most powerful and swift move.

Iron Blossom shrieked, during the shriek there was a clang sound. Even as quick, Yang Zijiang drew a short sword and blocked Shade's sabre.

Both did not move and had already exchanged ten odd stances in a few moments, but nobody could hear the clattering sound of weapons. In the eyes of laymen it seemed that both men were just displaying their stances individually. But Yu Peiyu knew how dangerous this battle really was.

The two of them really fought at close range, Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why aren't they moving to avoid the opponent's blows?"

Yu Peiyu kept his eyes on the battle and explained: "Because both of them are extremely fast, if Shade hacks Yang Zijiang has already counter-attacked, as result Shade has to change stance to protect himself. He chooses the attack as the best form of defense, so Yang Zijiang's initial stance has to be broken off to protect himself again. However Yang Zijiang's also chooses the same tactic as Shade using the attack as the best form of defense. All the stances, techniques they have used are extremely lethal but cannot harm each other yet."

Zhu Lei'Er said with shock: "So if Yang Zijiang is just a bit slower, he will be hacked with one stroke."

Yu Peiyu looked at Hai Dongqing and sighed: "I fear that there will be more than one strokes."

Zhu Lei'Er was really anxious when she realised the danger Shade forms and sighed: "Where does this madman come from?"

Yu Peiyu sighed too: "Now I know that the realm of martial arts is truly a big place, filled with mysterious unknown experts."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Although this Yang Zijiang's motives are questionable, he did save us. We really should aid him."

Yu Peiyu said: "Do you want to join him in this battle?"

Zhu Lei'Er whispered: "We can sneak up on that Shade and attack him in the back, he won't suspect a thing."

Yu Peiyu did not reply, he picked up a pair of chopsticks and slowly walked behind Shade. He was now several metres away from Shade and threw out the chopsticks using the commonly known Hand arrow's technique.

A sharp Cling sound could be heard, around this time both Shade and Yang Zijiang were standing on a different spot

and the pair of chopsticks was stuck into a wall. The chopsticks broke into seven pieces, Zhu Lei'Er had no idea how it was sliced into seven pieces and what method was used to ward off the chopsticks.

Yu Peiyu walked back to Zhu Lei'Er and asked: "And?"

Zhu Lei'Er was too surprised to speak.

Looking at Yang Zijiang and Shade, Yang Zijiang looked very anxious and earnest now. But Shade was still smiling, he kept the same smile from the moment he arrived.....it looked like if the smile was carved onto his face, never changing no matter what circumstance.

Yu Peiyu knew that if the battle continued, Yang Zijiang will lose. When it came to martial arts both were equal to each other, but as the fight will progress Yang Zijiang will soon feel frustrated and worried.

No matter how calm he is, he knows what the consequences will be when he loses. His martial arts brother is severely injured and his wife is absolutely no match for this Shade.

Shade, on the other hand is just a walking corpse with no thoughts to trouble him. Nothing can affect his condition, because of that Hai Dongqing probably lost to him.

Suddenly Yang Zijiang sighed and leapt away, he knew that he could not defeat Shade like this and hoped to use a different method.

But Shade followed him and both exchanged another seven, eight stances mid-air. And when they landed they stood again just about 2 metres apart from each other again.

No matter how Yang Zijiang changed his stances, Shade could adapt immediately to his variations and changes.

Yang Zijiang began to sweat, actually he broke out in a cold sweat. He was not the only one, Zhu Lei'Er was too breaking out in a cold sweat and Iron Blossom was trembling with fear.

Yu Peiyu now stepped out of the house, Zhu Lei'Er knew he was not the type of person to walk out alone and leave everything behind. But she could not guess what he was up to now. Although it was awesome and interesting fight, but in Zhu Lei'Er's heart Yu Peiyu was even more awesome and interesting. Even if the fight was ten times more interesting and awesome, she would still only have eyes for Yu Peiyu.

He was back in a blink of an eye carrying a tree, six months ago he used a pillar in Murder Manor to defeat 20 odd Kunlun and Diancang experts. After observing Shade's techniques he remembered something, clumsiness over ingenuity. So he pulled out a tree from outside and came in again, Zhu Lei'Er knew he had immense strength but seeing in his exhausted condition still pulling out trees was new even to her. She looked at Yu Peiyu with awe, Yu Peiyu broke all the branches just leaving behind the trunk. He roared now and used the trunk to sweep through the house.

Shade had already heard the sweeping sound and twirled his sabre behind his back to hack away the object that was coming towards him. He used the same technique to ward off the chopsticks, but this was not a pair of chopsticks but an entire tree trunk. Shade had powerful internal energy but he could not use a sabre to hack a tree trunk into two. His sabre was stuck into the trunk and Yang Zijiang quickly took advantage of this and stabbed Shade about 17, 18 times too.

Shade was still smiling and said: "Good! Good! But remember that Shade never dies, nobody can kill Shade....."

He pulled out his sabre and stabbed himself in his heart, the sabre pierced through his body.

Shade smiled: "Do not run! Shade will come any moment now to extract revenge."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed with relief: "Not only did he have eerie martial arts, the entire person was eerie."

Yang Zijiang sighed: "I think only ten odd people in Wulin can handle ten of his lethal, eerie techniques."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But you killed him. So only ten odd people in Wulin can handle ten stances from you."

Yang Zijiang smiled: "Thank you."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Your swordsmanship is very good, but without Yu Peiyu's help you would be dead now."

Yang Zijiang was not angry and said: "Very true."

He turned to Yu Peiyu and smiled: "Brother Yu, you keep surprising me. The first time we met I thought you were just a good-looking young fellow with no special talents, but the second time I had a better impression of you. However I was still not impressed by you, but now this is the third time I saw you in action and everytime you seem to raise in my esteem with two points. I do keep wondering how high your martial arts, I really have no clue as how to estimate you."

Yu Peiyu said: "Brother Yang, you're too kind but even I would not last ten stances with this Shade."

Yang Zijiang said: "Maybe you're right. Perhaps your martial arts at this point are not very superb, however within three years you will not be inferior to me anymore."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Since when did you become so friendly?"

Yang Zijiang said seriously: "I'm not being friendly, I'm just telling the truth. I don't need to flatter to brother Yu. What level of martial arts one achieve is really predestined, no matter how diligent one is sometimes they will not reach the ultimate level. The same goes for chess, painting, etc. it really depends on your own talent, otherwise you can practise till you drop dead but still reach only beginnings; only capable of learning the form but not the essence. That is why in all these hundreds of years only a few great masters are produced for instance Wu Daozi (painter), Wang Xizhi (calligrapher)."

{Note: Wu Daozi: a famous painter in the Tang Dynasty, till even now his paintings are widely respected and admired. Wang Xizhi: famous calligrapher, 303 A.D. - 361 AD. His calligraphy is said to be unmatched everyone even now still admires his characters.}

He paused for a minute before adding: "However if you do not train properly, all the talent in the world won't do you any good."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Why are you that talkative at this moment, are you afraid of Shade coming back for you?"

Yang Zijiang smiled: "I wasn't afraid of him when he was alive and I certainly don't fear him when he is dead."

Everyone was laughing now and glanced at the corpse of Shade, but to their surprise the body was gone, their laughter was gone now. The body of Shade began to rot and in an instant all that was left was a pool of blood and pus.

Yu Peiyu remembered that day when he saw that fake Xie Tianbi's body washed away by the rain. His body melted away in the same way, Yu Peiyu was shocked and happy.

That fake Xie Tianbi was a lackey of Yu Fanghe and this Shade too. Because both bodies were dissolved by the same type of poison and it seemed that Shade's poison was also concealed in a hollow tooth. He was afraid that when he died people would find out more about his identity.

But both Shade and Yang Zijiang were working for Yu Fanghe, why would Shade want to kill Yang Zijiang. Could it be that Yu Fanghe knew that Yang Zijiang had betrayed him?

No matter whether it is Yang Zijiang or Shade both seemed to have superior martial arts to Yu Fanghe, why did they not take over his position in this secret organisation? Why would they follow his commands like this?

Yu Peiyu's heart was filled with questions, but he did not show it. He also was thinking about Yang Zijiang's mysterious actions. Suddenly he asked casually to Yang

Zijiang: "What does [The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, flowing through the universe] mean? I know it is the first line of the Thousand-character Classic, but I think brother Yang knows why he recited that part."

Yang Zijiang was silent for a moment and said: "This is an extremely difficult and great matter....."

A voice interrupted him: "Shade will never die, nobody can kill Shade. Shade is here to extract revenge."

Before everyone knew what was going on, a figure appeared at the door again.

A man with a mysterious smile on his face, he wore a black robe too with a red girdle with a black sabre stuck in it. He looked identical to the other Shade and when they looked down the body of the dead Shade was gone. Could it be that Shade can never die? He has come back to avenge himself.....

Even men with great courage like Yu Peiyu and Yang Zijiang shivered when they saw this man, Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom shrieked with fear.

Yang Zijiang did not speak and attacked immediately he aimed for his throat. He was afraid to make the same mistake as earlier, he stepped forward with three paces and attacked Shade from the left.

He used a stance with tremendous variations and hoped to gain the upperhand.

However this Shade seemed to have anticipated his attack and slashed into Yang Zijiang's direction three times with his sabre. Shade seemed to know how and what the stances of Yang Zijiang are.

Yang Zijiang had no choice but to abort his attack and block the sabre, Shade seemed again to anticipate that move and chopped towards Yang Zijiang's elbow. Yang Zijiang quickly changed stance to block that stance after four stances he could with difficulty divert Shade's attack but he could not

move forward or backward. He did not want to repeat the tactics like earlier with the first Shade, but now he had no choice but to fight like earlier.

No matter what kinds of changes he brought into his stances, they were all in vain. Because Shade always blocked his attacks before he could utilize them.

Shade was gaining the upperhand now and this Shade had figured out Yang Zijiang's techniques. It is comparable to two people playing go, and one of the players already knew which move the other would make.

Shade smiled: "You know you can never escape from the Shade, give up and you will die swift and painless."

Yang Zijiang stayed quiet, but he knew he was fighting a losing battle.

Shade smiled: "You must be surprised why Shade knows your martial arts so well, that is because Shade has already fought you before."

Yang Zijiang was really scared now, he was never that scared before in his life. Was this Shade really the same Shade he fought before, did he come back to take revenge now? He began to believe that Shade can never die and will always come back.

Shade said: "Die now! Shade can promise you, you will die very swiftly and painless."

His voice had also a hypnotic effect on Yang Zijiang too now.

If Yang Zijiang was a disciple of Shaolin, Wudang it is not strange that Shade could see through his stances. Shaolin and Wudang have existed for many generations and their skills have been around for decades in Wulin now. Every stance, technique was performed with a certain flair, although every generation or so one, two experts from these schools could "glue" all the stances together not revealing any flaws.

But it is not surprising that most people recognize the skills of the great orthodox schools, that is why most experts of these schools do not place emphasis on their stances but rather on internal energy cultivation. And rely on internal strength to defeat their adversaries. But the martial arts of Yang Zijiang were very mysterious and could be said that no one in Wulin knew who his teacher was.

But how is possible that Shade knew the style of Yang Zijiang. He was beginning to lose faith in this fight. Although Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom did not understand the style of Yang Zijiang, but they could see that he was losing and his life was in danger.

They were surprised why Yu Peiyu did not step in yet to help. They heard Yu Peiyu shouting: "He doesn't know your martial arts, he examined your style from Hai Dongqing."

Zhu Lei'Er was a bit stunned but immediately understood what he meant, Yang Zijiang regained his confidence now.

He said loudly: "Of course! Of course!"

He casually stabbed out with his sword towards the stomach of the Shade.

There was nothing special to this stance, but it did force Shade in a defensive position.

Yang Zijiang attacked with another three stances and Shade back away with one step, there was nothing special about these three attacks. Zhu Lei'Er pondered long and suddenly smiled sweetly: "I understand now...." But then she frowned again: "No, I'm wrong I do not understand." And shook her head again.

Iron Blossom asked: "What do you not understand?"

Zhu Lei'Er did not reply, he picked up the sabre of the dead Shade and hacked casually towards this Shade.

Yu Peiyu just slowly hacked towards the shoulder of Shade, even if Yu Peiyu was able to hit him Shade would not be

severely injured. Furthermore Shade does not have to avoid such a slow and seemingly worthless attack. But when the blade almost reached his shoulder it was too late to avoid. Yu's attack was very slow everyone could easily avoid it, but when Shade actually wanted to avoid it Yu Peiyu twirled the sabre around.

The sabre sort of turned into a iron wheel, Yu Peiyu twirled the sabre so fast now that it turned a spinning wheel. To the laymen such a technique is of no use. But how could Shade not pay attention to a whirling blade that close to him. Zhu Lei'Er had no idea what Yu Peiyu was doing, but at this point she understood the beauty of Yu Peiyu's move. That round twirl was not a stance and had no flaws in it even if Shade wanted to break this stance he would not know how.

This attack was not a stance, but it did have a sabre. If there is a sabre Shade must avoid that is the sabre not the non-existing stance.

Shade smiled: "Excellent sabre! Excellent sabre!"

After saying this Yu Peiyu had already hacked him down. Because he did not know how to avoid Yu's attack, but even so he had to ward off Yang Zijiang's techniques first. But when he focussed his attention to ward off those stances, he will be hacked down by Yu Peiyu.

And if he turned around and paid attention to Yu, he will be pierced by Yang Zijiang.

Shade turned around to counter Yu Peiyu, but was already stabbed in the back by Yang Zijiang.

Shade fell down but kept smiling: "Good! Very good! Unfortunately Shade never dies and nobody can kill him....."

Yang Zijiang did not look at the body of this Shade but only kept his eyes on Yu Peiyu for some time, in the end he sighed: "It is said that the legendary general Li's blade techniques were unmatched throughout the analects of

Wulin. Nobody could withstand his sabre, because every time he drew his sabre he became one with his weapon. People could only see his [stance] but not the essence and his sabre. In other words the stance is visual but the sabre is everywhere, that is why nobody could block his stances."

Yu Peiyu said: "I too have heard about the tales of the famous general Li, many seniors have told me about his tale."

Yang Zijiang smiled a bit: "Very much the same about you, your name was also be mentioned many times in the future."

Yu Peiyu said: "Me?"

Yang Zijiang said: "Yes, you!"

He sounded a bit angry and annoyingly pointed at Yu Peiyu's blade and said: "Not because of your personality not because your handsome face, because you created a new unfounded style of using the sabre."

Yu Peiyu just smiled, not because he was praised but because he remembered the words of a wise man: "An arrogant man will always become slightly angry when he is forced to praise another man."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I have never studied how to use a sabre before."

Yang Zijiang smiled wryfully: "That is why you're so formidable! No techniques in the blade is much more sophisticated and superior to no blade but visible forms."

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly laughed: "Men always say that women are so talkative, but I think you're too talkative now at this moment. This is not the time to chit-chat about martial arts."

Yang Zijiang laughed too: "You're absolutely right, this is not the time to chit-chat."

Zhu Lei'Er said with a serious face: "Shade can never die and will come back instantly to extract revenge."

She could imitate the voice of Shade very good and when everyone thought about Shade nobody could laugh anymore.

Yang Zijiang wiped away his sweat and said: "Brother Yu, I know you have a lot queries at the moment. However I can tell you that I am not your enemy, I am your friend."

The reply of Yu Peiyu was very short and resolute: "I believe you!"

Yang Zijiang said with relief: "Very good! I hope you can help me."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What can I do for you?"

Yang Zijiang said: "There is a secret tunnel in this house, take the women and the wounded through that tunnel. Take those chests with you too."

Yu Peiyu asked: "How about you?"

Yang Zijiang said casually: "I can look after myself, I also don't need your concern and your help here."

Yu Peiyu said: "But you....."

Yang Zijiang said with an annoyed tone: "If I cannot defeat him I can at least run away. But with you here, I cannot even run away with a peaceful heart."

He helped Hai Dongqing up and said: "If you're still suspicious about us, ask my martial arts brother when he wakes up."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But you....."

Yang Zijiang frowned and said: "I'm leaving my wife in your care too, do you actually think I will never return."

The tunnel was rather stuffy and damp, the entrance of the tunnel was under the kitchen's furnace. Not even Iron Blossom knew of the existence of this tunnel.

It really smelled awful in the tunnel and after awhile Zhu Lei'Er could not stand the air anymore and said softly:

“Great!?! Why did we listen to him in the first place. What are we doing in this rat hole anyway. Who knows what lies up ahead, a pit full of poisonous animals, traps. As the saying goes: [There is a way leading to heaven, but we deliberately opened the road to hell].”

Iron Blossom bit her lip and said: “Can’t you trust anybody in your life?”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “At least I know that I should not marry to anyone without knowing him properly.”

Iron Blossom stared at Zhu Lei’Er, Zhu Lei’Er stared back. Both looked like two cats about to fight each other. After awhile Iron Blossom lowered her head and said softly: “I am not like you, I don’t have anyone who loves and cares for me. If somebody just treats me nicely, I....I...am very happy.”

Zhu Lei’Er did not know what to say and walked ahead with big paces, but soon she turned around and walked back to Iron Blossom and hugged her. She said: “Don’t be angry with me, I was blurted out what was on my mind. I...I don’t have a home too and nobody was there to teach me etiquette. I often say the wrong things to upset people.”

Iron Blossom looked at her and smiled with difficulty: “Who says you always upset people. I think you’re one of the most adorable and cute girls I have ever met.”

Zhu Lei’Er lowered her head and smiled, she looked at Yu Peiyu and said softly: “I know why you married Yang Zijiang, you wanted to investigate Yang Zijiang and protect us from him.”

Iron Blossom sighed: “That was my original plan, but afterwards I found out that he is not bad at all. Just a bit annoying at times....”

Yu Peiyu said with a smile: “I think that annoying side of his is just an act....”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Why would he do something like that?”

Yu Peiyu said: "Some people have great ambitions and have to hide their desires from the world....They hope not to be noticed by some."

Suddenly they heard a loud Boom from above, Zhu Lei'Er said with fear in her voice: "Another Shade must have come."

Iron Blossom turned pale and began to tremble.

Yu Peiyu suddenly smiled: "Have you heard of the tale about the Child Prodigy exhausting the Blood Shadow?"

They were a bit surprised to hear Yu Peiyu asking them such a strange question, but Zhu Lei'Er always like to hear stories and this story would be told by Yu Peiyu. She smiled: "Blood Shadow, judging by his name he is probably not a good fellow."

Yu Peiyu nodded: "You're right. He was bloodthirsty killer and was hated by almost everyone in the realm. But nobody was able to kill him."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Did he have very high martial arts?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "Yes, he had also a superb, unmatched level in art of levitation. Once he was surrounded by more than ten experts but in the end he still managed to escape them."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Who is this Child Prodigy?"

Yu Peiyu said: "The Child Prodigy was just a little boy and new in the realm of martial arts. Nobody knew where he came from and actually nobody was really interested in it either. However one day he did a most amazing thing that caught the attention of everyone in Wulin."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What was it?"

Yu Peiyu said: "He hired a lot of people to write notices throughout the realm, he wanted to compete with Blood Shadow in the art of levitation. If Blood Shadow did not appear he would be coward."

Iron Blossom also listened attentively and asked: “Did Blood Shadow go?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Blood Shadow was a very arrogant man and looked down upon almost everyone. Within three days he looked up the Child Prodigy and said that whoever would reach the city of Wuhan would win. They started in Beijing and the finish would be in Wuhan, the distance was about 2500 kilometres. The loser would fall into the victor’s hands and the victor could do anything as he pleases with the loser.”

Iron Blossom asked: “Why did Blood Shadow not kill the Child Prodigy at once, he was already an infamous butcher.”

Yu Peiyu said: “Because he was so arrogant, he agreed to compete with the Child Prodigy. If he used another method to kill the Child Prodigy, he would become the laughing stock of Wulin.”

Yu Peiyu added with a smile: “Besides Blood Shadow’s level in this art was really high, not even the famous reverend Feilong (Flying Dragon) from Kunlun School could catch up with him. And he knew that the Child Prodigy was not even 15 years old yet, so he did not think he would have a high level in this art.”

Zhu Lei’Er frowned and said: “If that is the case, didn’t the Child Prodigy make a big mistake?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Everyone in Wulin thought the same, and feared for the life of the Child Prodigy. However the outcome was a big surprise to everyone.”

Zhu Lei’Er smiled sweetly: “So the Child Prodigy won!”

Yu Peiyu said: “Both started in Beijing and during dusk Blood Shadow had reached Shijiazhuang.”

Iron Blossom said with surprise: “He is really fast this Blood Shadow.”

Yu Peiyu said: “He thought he had left the Child Prodigy far and far behind, and he found an inn and sat down and

wanted to take dinner now. But suddenly he looked outside and saw the Child Prodigy passing by the inn and he did not look tired at all."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "This Child Prodigy is not to be trifled with."

Yu Peiyu continued: "Blood Shadow did not stop for dinner anymore and rushed out to give chase after travelling for many kilometres he finally stopped. He was getting a bit tired now."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I would have passed already with fatigue."

Yu Peiyu said: "He noticed that up ahead was a road stall that sold tofo soup and other dishes. It smelt very nice and was hungry now, so he walked over to it."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "But when he reached that stall he saw the Child Prodigy passing by, right?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "You're right, the Child Prodigy did not look tired at all. Blood Shadow did not rest and gave chase again."

Iron Blossom asked: "Could he have been mistaken this Blood Shadow?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Blood Shadow was also a top expert in using secretive weaponry. It was even said he could see flies from a 500 metres away, a bit exaggerated in my opinion but still he had excellent eyesight."

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "He had a pair of thieving eyes."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "This Blood Shadow was really an amazing talented man, but nonetheless he was just another man and when he reached Wuhan he finally fell down from fatigue."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Did he not rest on his way to Wuhan?"

Chapter 35 : The Reincarnation Of The Shade

The laughing came from between them and in an instant it came from metres away from them. Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom thought that this man could have killed them most easily when he was holding their hands and both broke out in a cold sweat again.

They could hear Yu Peiyu say: "This is not the same route we took earlier."

Yu Peiyu continued: "Not only did he not rest, he did not even eat nor drink."

He smiled a bit before he continued: "Everytime he wanted to sit down to eat or drink he would see the Child Prodigy passing by. That is why he did not rest and hurried over to Wuhan City and he finally reached The Yellow Crane Restaurant. However when he looked up he saw the Child Prodigy already sitting at the first floor and waving at him."

Zhu Lei'Er clapped her hands and said: "A wonderful story!"

Iron Blossom asked: "What happened with Blood Shadow? Did he commit suicide?"

Yu Peiyu said: "He was an evil man but he always kept to his word, besides when he reached Wuhan he was too exhausted to even stand. Even if he had the intention to run the attending heroes will not let him escape."

Iron Blossom said: "So an infamous villain died at the hands of a small boy."

Yu Peiyu said: "Exactly."

Zhu Lei'Er said enthusiastically: "A small boy of only 14 years old having such tremendous martial arts is truly amazing."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and smiled: "The Child Prodigy had good martial arts but compared to Blood Shadow he still had a long way to go."

Zhu Lei'Er did not understand and asked: "But how did he win?"

Iron Blossom thought for a minute and said: "Perhaps because he was younger than Blood Shadow, he could outrun him."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and smiled again: "No, that is not it."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Well, what was it?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Care to guess a few times?"

Zhu Lei'Er lowered her head and looked pensive for some time, after some time she clapped her hands and said: "I understand now, the Child Prodigy were twins, so the brothers could deceive Blood Shadow. Everytime one brother would quickly travel ahead to fool Blood Shadow."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Not right."

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised and said: "Wrong again?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Blood Shadow was an amazingly clever man, he couldn't be deceived that easily. Furthermore even with a good steed it was quite impossible to catch up with him."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Maybe...maybe...they took a short cut."

Yu Peiyu said: "Blood Shadow's route was already the shortest."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled wryly: "I.....I....give up, I really don't have a clue."

Iron Blossom suddenly said loudly: "I know!"

Yu Peiyu looked at her and just said: "Hmm?"

Iron Blossom said: "The Child Prodigy found a group of children about his age and size and told them to dress up

like him and fool Blood Shadow. In every small town or stop Blood Shadow would see a small boy passing by."

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "No, you're wrong again."

Iron Blossom said with surprise: "Wrong again?!?"

Yu Peiyu said: "As said before Blood Shadow is not a man who is easily fooled, he had very keen eyes so it would have impossible to use your plan to fool him."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You're right, there is bound to be a flaw in all those disguises if that plan would be used. Besides finding more than ten children about the same size as the Child Prodigy would also be extremely difficult."

Yu Peiyu added: "Also because the Child Prodigy studied a rather unique type of martial arts, it was impossible for others to imitate his movements. That is why Blood Shadow did not see through the Child Prodigy's plan."

Iron Blossom smiled wryly too: "I'm totally confused! How did the Child Prodigy succeed?"

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Actually it is not that difficult to guess at all, not twins but quintuplets. Five brothers looking identical."

Yang Zijiang was adamant not to let the people out of the boxes, and everyone had tied a box to their backs. That was why Zhu Lei'Er was not that happy and also all of them were quite tired, that is why Yu Peiyu told a story to keep everyone's spirit up. After listening to Yu Peiyu's tale Iron Blossom and Zhu Lei'Er did not feel that tired anymore.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Originally I thought you weren't a good story teller, but it turns out you're absolutely wonderful in telling stories."

Iron Blossom said: "A story of five brothers looking identical, truly hilarious."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "These five brothers will never get married."

Iron Blossom asked: "Why do you say that?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Girls will never want to marry them after hearing this tale."

Iron Blossom asked: "Why?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What if they decided to play the same joke on their wives, no girl can take that."

She blushed immediately after saying that.

Iron Blossom laughed: "You're right, if there is even a small mistake the outcome would be disastrous."

She too now blushed.

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Do you know why I told you this story?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Do you mean that those Shades are quintuplets too?"

Yu Peiyu said: "No, they're not quintuplets, but were created to look like each other."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I couldn't see they were wearing disguises."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "The normal type of the art of disguise can only fool people for a short time and can easily be seen through. However if one can successfully combine the art of disguise with sophisticated surgical techniques and when these "alterations" were brought on when they were young they can easily made identical to each other. And with herbal drugs they are being controlled and they are instructed to move exactly the same as each other. They have been manipulated to become mere puppets."

He paused for awhile before sighing again: "This may sound unbelievable, but I can guarantee you that there are people who are capable of doing this."

Zhu Lei'Er was amazed and scared when she heard this and said: "So with those drugs people will fall into the spell of this evil mastermind and their faces will be carved as he pleases."

Yu Peiyu said: "Right."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "In other words the second Shade was responsible for injuring Hai Dongqing, because he knew all the stances and variations of Yang Zijiang."

Yu Peiyu said: "True! Because Hai Dongqing and Yang Zijiang are martial arts brothers and studied, learnt the same type of martial arts."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "That is why Yang Zijiang regained his confidence when he heard you. Initially he was scared out of his wits why Shade would know his martial arts."

Yu Peiyu said: "If there is a third Shade, he would not be a threat. Because the third Shade would not know his martial arts, but Yang Zijiang had fought the two Shades already and has naturally grasped how to defeat them. Furthermore the changes, variations in Shade's martial arts are not many."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That is why you're not worried about him now, right?"

Yu Peiyu just smiled and did not answer, Iron Blossom sighed: "One can count himself very lucky if he is a friend of young master Yu."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "No matter what, I still do not entirely trust Yang Zijiang. His actions are most peculiar and strange, I have no idea what his objectives are."

Someone sighed: "He has his reasons for being secretive, he won't reveal anything till it really is necessary."

Hai Dongqing had awoken now, Yu Peiyu was carrying him all the way here and he now gradually had woken up.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Thank goodness! You're awake, till when are you going to keep this a secret? And when is this necessary time of yours?"

Hai Dongqing said earnestly: "I cannot tell you now, it is still too soon."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why?"

Hai Dongqing now got up and stood on his own said:
“Because this secret is no longer a secret anymore.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “What do you mean? This is obviously a secret.”

Hai Dongqing said: “There are some people who cannot keep a secret and you.....”

Zhu Lei’Er interrupted: “Fine....fine! I don’t care about your secret! I just want to ask you who are you? And what does [The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, flowing through the universe] mean?”

Hai Dongqing stayed quiet for a minute and said: “Yang Zijiang and I were orphans and our teacher could be said is our parent.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “I already know you’re orphans but who is your teacher?”

Hai Dongqing looked a bit angry and said coldly: “This is a long story, if you want to listen do not interrupt.”

Zhu Lei’Er pouted: “Well! It is not that I have to listen to your story.”

Hai Dongqing said: “Even if you don’t want to hear it, I have to tell it.”

Zhu Lei’Er laughed: “A typical stubborn mule!”

Hai Dongqing did not pay attention to her and turned to Yu Peiyu: “I wanted to tell you this for a long time, because this story does involve you brother Yu.”

Yu Peiyu’s face changed a bit but still did not speak. Hai Dongqing added: “My teacher has retreated from worldly affairs a long time ago. I doubt it that you would have heard of my teacher’s name, I do not wish to boast about my teacher. But I can guarantee you that my teacher is truly an amazing person and my teacher was already invincible in the realm 50 years ago.”

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Perhaps because your teacher did not encounter people like master Feng San and only met other lesser opponents."

Hai Dongqing still ignored her and said: "My teacher had only one adversary, this person was also an amazing character. He not only had exceptional martial arts but he was also well-versed in numerous fields, however he was too vicious and evil. My teacher and another Wulin senior forced him to flee to the outskirts of China and made him promise never to set foot again in China as long as my teacher and that other Wulin senior are still alive."

Yu Peiyu was surprised and asked: "Who is this adversary?"

Hai Dongqing said: "My teacher did not reveal his name but just said he is called Mr. Dongguo."

Yu Peiyu frowned and said: "Mr. Dongguo?"

Hai Dongqing said: "It is not strange that brother Yu has not heard of his name, because he has kept his promise and has lived in the western borders of China for 30 years and has not set foot in China."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "The heretic experts of 30 years ago knew how to keep their word, the present heretic martial artists cannot be compared to the old ones."

Hai Dongqing said: "This Dongguo fellow did not repent for his past crimes, it is just that he doesn't dare to openly commit atrocities."

He sighed deeply before continueing: "According to my teacher he has been planning something big in the past 30 years and wants to dominate the realm of martial arts. Now my teacher has retired and the other Wulin senior has passed away years ago, so he believes his time has come. He....he....."

At this point Hai Dongqing was feeling very tired and couldn't even stand properly now.

Iron Blossom put down her box and helped him sit on it, she cared a lot for Hai Dongqing because he is the martial arts brother of her husband, Yang Zijiang.

Zhu Lei'Er asked with great concern: "Do you mean that old Dongguo has returned with his evil plans?"

Hai Dongqing sighed: "Although my teacher has kept a watchful eye on this Dongguo even in retirement. But Dongguo is a very cunning old fox and has managed to conceal his crimes perfectly without evidence my teacher cannot openly expose him yet. However a few months ago my teacher left without a word and came back three months later and told us to do something after return."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What was that task?"

Hai Dongqing said: "My teacher instructed us to spy on the present chancellor of Wulin, Yu Fanghe."

Yu Peiyu looked very serious and said: "So Yu Fang... this Yu person is just a puppet of Dongguo, I knew he would have a powerful person helping him."

Hai Dongqing said: "My teacher never likes to say too much, we as disciples just put the pieces together and deducted this much. Mr. Dongguo has not revealed himself yet and has a man with a wonderful reputation doing his dirty jobs. Yu Fanghe is a hypocritical fiend and using him is perfect."

Yu Peiyu's face changed but still did not speak yet.

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly remembered something and said: "No wonder when Yu Fanghe made a gesture to Tian Chixing, Tian Chixing immediately stopped creating trouble for Yu Fanghe. He too must know of the skills of Mr. Dongguo."

Hai Dongqing said coldly: "With the exception of my teacher no one in the world can withstand a blow from Mr. Dongguo. Feng San.....*humph."

He did not finish his sentence but his meaning was obvious.

Zhu Lei'Er did not retort back this time, because she knew that Tian Chixing's martial arts was about the same with her third uncle. And if Tian Chixing feared Mr. Dongguo, imagine how powerful Dongguo could be.

Zhu Lei'Er did not wish to discuss that matter right now but asked: "But what does [The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, flowing through the universe] mean?"

Hai Dongqing explained: "Mr. Dongguo could not meet up with Yu Fanghe himself so he sent two emissaries on his behalf. These emissaries were intercepted by my teacher and found out that the sentence [The mysteries of Heaven and Earth, flowing through the universe] was their secret code."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why did they reveal that secret code to your teacher?"

Hai Dongqing said casually: "Almost everyone will have to tell the truth when they face my teacher."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "So your teacher instructed you to pass off as the two emissaries as to fool Yu Fanghe."

Hai Dongqing said: "Indeed."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "That is why Yu Fanghe would trust you two that much."

Hai Dongqing continued: "Mr. Dongguo has entrusted Yu Fanghe with that much authority, meaning that Yu Fanghe is also a formidable man. After meeting up with him a few times we noticed that Yu Fanghe is a very cunning and intelligent old fiend. It will not be easy to deal with him, so we do as we are told by him."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "That is why you brought presents for him?"

Hai Dongqing said coldly: "What do the lives of a few matter, when the entire Wulin is at stake. Besides we will not take the lives of innocent, all these we have dealt with are people who deserve this fate. If we are truly vicious brother Yu would have been dead a long time ago."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "At least you still know to differ good from evil, if not you wouldn't live till now."

Although she knew that Hai Dongqing and Yang Zijiang stood at their side, but still she could not prevent herself from arguing with Hai Dongqing.

Hai Dongqing ignored that remark and continued: "Our cover was flawless, but we did not anticipate that Mr. Dongguo would send a few extra emissaries to Yu Fanghe. When they met Yu Fanghe our cover was blown and Yu Fanghe sent people to deal with us."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Do you mean those Shades?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Correct, our teacher has mentioned that Mr. Dongguo had five Shades as his students, lackeys. And every Shade has six identical look-alikes, Mr. Dongguo is well-versed in the art of disguise and his medical skills are also excellent. He combined both together and surgically changed the appearances of the Shades."

Yu Peiyu looked very pale now, the secret he hoped to unravel was finally beginning to make sense now to him.

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Since your teacher already told you about Shade, why was Yang Zijiang still afraid when he saw them?"

Hai Dongqing explained: "My teacher had only recently discovered this secret and just a few days ago I saw my teacher and was told about this. Younger brother Yang was still with Yu Fanghe at the time, so he was not informed about the Shades. This is the first time I saw him since a long time."

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "No wonder when Shade recited those two lines Yang Zijiang's face changed, because he knew his identity was exposed."

Iron Blossom said worriedly: "This Shade has another six look-alikes, but...but...that means that another four of them will beCan he handle all of them?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Every Shade consists of seven bodies, I killed two bodies of this Shade."

Iron Blossom said worriedly: "But....but there are still three of them....."

Zhu Lei'Er said gently: "Do not worry, an expert like Yang Zijiang is not afraid of three mere ghosts. He wouldn't be afraid of 300 ghosts."

Iron Blossom smiled but everyone could see she was dying of worry.

Hai Dongqing said: "When three of those Shades would attack, Yang Zijiang will not be able to withstand their combined attack. However because they are controlled by drugs which makes them very slow. That is why I could even escape when I was severely injured. I think that Yang Zijiang can surely escape from them even when he is outnumbered by them."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What about us? What is this place? Who created this tunnel and for what purpose?"

Hai Dongqing said casually: "This is not our concern, our main concern is that exit out of here."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Are you sure there is an exit? What if there is only a dead end here?"

Hai Dongqing frowned and said: "At least I am quite sure this tunnel won't lead us to the netherworld."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I have to differ on that, the entrance of this underground tunnel could be compared to the entrance to the"

She did not finish her sentence, she felt a cold breeze that made her shiver till her spine.

Yu Peiyu turned to Hai Dongqing and asked: "Brother Hai, I....I would like to ask you for a favour....."

Hai Dongqing said: "Brother Yu, do you wish to meet my teacher?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, indeed."

Hai Dongqing shook his head and said: "This is most difficult."

Yu Peiyu said: "I really have important matters to discuss and to ask your teacher."

Hai Dongqing asked: "Why?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I have an important secret that I have to tell your teacher."

He looked very sad now and continued: "Maybe because only your teacher will understand and believe what I have been through. I just hope your teacher will be able to grant me an audience, brother Hai I just want you to inform your teacher that I would like to meet him. Whether he sees me or not is really up to heaven."

Hai Dongqing stayed silent for a minute before saying: "Does this have to do with the plans of Mr. Dongguo?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Indeed and it is of great importance."

Hai Dongqing asked: "Could you tell me what this is?"

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply: "It is not that I do not trust brother Hai, but....but.....this....this...."

He started to shiver and could not continue.

Hai Dongqing saw Yu Peiyu's expression and sighed: "It is not that I do not wish to help you, but our teacher has not seen outsiders for more than 20 years. Our teacher has strictly forbidden us to reveal the whereabouts and goings concerning master. I cannot go against the orders of my teacher I hope you can understand."

Yu Peiyu smiled sadly and nodded, he said after some time: "I understand."

Hai Dongqing said: "Our teacher might meet up with you at any time in the future, who knows you might have met master already. My teacher's habits are most peculiar."

Yu Peiyu nodded and was suddenly stunned like he remembered something.

Hai Dongqing got up and said: "We don't know how long this tunnel is, let us continue."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What about these three chests? Why do we have to carry them along? Can't we just free the people insided the chests and let them walk on their own?"

Hai Dongqing said: "The people in the box won't wake up for some time and it is no use letting them out. Let us carry the chests along with us."

Zhu Lei'Er stamped her feet and said: "How very fortunate."

The tunnel was illuminated by old lamps and gave the tunnel an extra eerie feeling.

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly said: "Do you know how many lamps we have passed?"

Yu Peiyu knew that she could never keep quiet and would always come up with some new questions after some time. And those questions would be most strange.

Nobody understood why she would ask a question like that and nobody know how to answer her so they kept quiet.

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Till now, we have passed 39 lamps. Isn't that strange?"

Hai Dongqing could not control himself and asked: "What is so strange about that?"

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "You don't think this is strange because you see but do not observe. Furthermore you do not think ahead."

Hai Dongqing coldly replied: "Because I have more pressing matters to think about than a few lamps."

Zhu Lei'Er did not retort but just stared at a lamp, Hai Dongqing stopped too and stood still and looked at the lamp too. After some time he said: "I can't see anything strange about this lamp."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Really?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Have you noticed something?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Yes, I have. Strange, very strange, most strange."

Hai Dongqing asked: "What is strange?"

Zhu Lei'Er pouted: "Well, if this is so insignificant why bother asking."

Hai Dongqing was angry now but did not know what to say back. A worried Iron Blossom was very amused to see this and even smiled. She noticed that Zhu Lei'Er had a fantastic ability to make people angry, even surpassing using poison.

When men meet girls like her, the best thing for them to do is to keep silent.

However Zhu Lei'Er has met her match too, when she is with Yu Peiyu she is always very obedient and nice.

Because Yu Peiyu will not speak when it is not the proper time to talk.

Zhu Lei'Er smiled proudly: "There are in total 39 lamps at this moment in this tunnel, there are at least four, five strange clues about these lamps. If you are as intelligent as I you will see what I mean."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Girls are more precise than men, I don't know and I have been thinking about your question too for some time."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled even happier now and said: "We passed 39 lamps and still have not found the exit yet. This means that this is a very long tunnel and there aren't that many long tunnels."

Yu Peiyu said: "Indeed."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "The person who constructed this tunnel must have a special reason for constructing such a long tunnel. If he wanted an escape route he could have made

the exit anywhere there is no need to create such a long passage.”

Yu Peiyu looked very earnest now and said: “True.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “The construction of such a long tunnel should take about three to five years, Yang Zijiang started to roam the realm only recently. This means this tunnel was not built on his orders.”

Iron Blossom asked: “Could it be their teacher?”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “No. If so he would also know about this passage.” And she looked at Hai Dongqing.

Iron Blossom nodded in agreement.

Zhu Lei’Er said: “The person who constructed this must have an secret plan for this tunnel, but how and why would Yang Zijiang know about this.”

Iron Blossom said: “Maybe this passage was constructed a very long time ago and Yang Zijiang only discovered it recently.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Impossible.”

Iron Blossom asked: “Why?”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “The cottage in which you live in must be build at the same time when the construction of this passage begun. The cottage is not very old, taken very broadly about ten years.”

Iron Blossom said: “It could have been renovated.....”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “The house is just a cover to protect this secret passage. Furthermore there is an even more important reason.”

Iron Blossom asked: “What is that?”

Zhu Lei’Er pointed at a lamp and said: “These lamps.”

Iron Blossom said with surprise: “Lamps?”

Zhu Lei’Er asked: “Right, these lamps. Let me ask you, how long can lamps like these burn without adding oil?”

Iron Blossom said: "Without adding oil an ordinary lamp will burn out in just one evening. These bronze lamps are bigger so I would say an entire day."

Zhu Lei'Er clapped her hands and said: "There! These lamps are still burning and that means that everyday someone is adding oil to them."

She blinked and continued: "Furthermore Yang Zijiang was not here recently so someone else must have added the oil."

Iron Blossom was most surprised and exclaimed: "Who can it be?"

Zhu Lei'Er said seriously: "Maybe the person who constructed this passage or his servant. But one thing is sure there is someone else in this passage and he may be spying on us right now."

The soft wind blew through the passage and the fires swayed with the wind giving the tunnel an extra chilly and horrifying atmosphere.

Iron Blossom looked around and could imagine someone looking at them with an evil smile.

She shivered and smiled with difficulty: "Why am I such a coward now?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I hear that women become cowards after getting married."

Hai Dongqing said: "Even if there is another person here, he has no ill intentions otherwise Yang Zijiang would not tell us to go in here."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Not necessarily."

She did not give Hai Dongqing to speak and added: "It could be that he doesn't know that there is another person in this passage. Or perhaps he coincidentally found this empty house and decided to reside here since nobody lives here anyway....."

Iron Blossom said: "Exactly! When he first took me to this place I noticed the house was covered with a thick layer of dust."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "On the other hand he must have discovered this place a long time ago, otherwise he would not arrange a meeting with Wang Yuluo and others here."

She looked at Hai Dongqing and continued: "You must know of this place, right? If not you would not flee here."

Hai Dongqing said: "Wang Yuluo told me about this place, before I did not know of its existence." He looked a bit insecure now and continued: "Anyway there is someone else here. There is no point in guessing let us find that person first."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "We don't need to look for him, he is bound to look for us."

Iron Blossom looked around and said: "I don't know who this person is. But I do hope he would show himself soon."

Zhu Lei'Er said indifferently: "If it is person there is no reason why we should fear him, but if he isn't human then we have a problem."

Iron Blossom shivered and unintentionally moved closer to Yu Peiyu, Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "I don't think you are really scared, you just want to...."

Before Zhu Lei'Er could finish her sentence the fire died out. They all could see a flash of light up ahead of the next lamp and everyone rushed over to it, however when they got there the fire died out too.

It was pitch dark now in the passage and everyone was very worried now.

Zhu Lei'Er said softly: "If I could buy a lamp or lamp oil now I would give the vendor all the taels of silver I had just for one lamp and a bit of oil."

Hai Dongqing said: "I have a paper flint."

Yu Peiyu asked: "How long can your paper flint last?"

Hai Dongqing said: "I have used it twice already, we could use it for another hour or so."

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "Take it out! We might find the exit in that hour or so."

Yu Peiyu said: "What if we cannot?"

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned but said: "Let us try anyway."

Yu Peiyu said: "No we cannot try. This paper flint is our only hope if the flint dies out too we will be stuck here and will never see another sunrise again."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "We can always go back."

Yu Peiyu said: "No, we cannot go back."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why?"

Yu Peiyu said: "This passage looks like it is just one straight route however it has its corners and turns. We cannot recognize the way back just by touching the wall, we might walk around in circles in the end."

Iron Blossom said with fear: "So the lamps were extinguished by that person?"

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Did you see anyone?"

Iron Blossom said: "No...but.....but...."

Zhu Lei'Er smiled: "Don't tell me that you think that person knows how to cloak himself?"

Although she was joking she could not help herself but to grab hold of Yu Peiyu's arm.

Hai Dongqing said: "We can't stand here either."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "You're right, when outside we could wait till it is day. But we cannot stay here and wait till the lamps burn again."

Yu Peiyu said: "We move forward by touching the wall and we will use the paper flint only if necessary."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "But when is necessary?"

Yu Peiyu said: "This....this...."

Hai Dongqing said: "This time I have to agree with Zhu.....Miss Zhu. We should use the flint and dash forward and hope we can make it before the flint dies out too."

Iron Blossom said: "I agree. It is all or nothing now."

Hai Dongqing said: "To move quicker we have no choice but to leave the chests behind, when we find the exit we will find a way to come back for them and save them."

Yu Peiyu said: "And if we cannot find the exit?"

Hai Dongqing said: "If we cannot find the exit all of us are doomed."

Yu Peiyu stayed quiet for some time and sighed in the end: "I don't know if you're doing the right thing. However three minds are better than one I believe....."

The paper flint could not shine very far but at least there was some light. Everyone was very anxious because the oblivious darkness could really destroy the spirit and courage of everyone.

Yu Peiyu lead the way with the flint in his hand, they walked very fast. Although Hai Dongqing was injured he was pulled along by Yu Peiyu making sure he would not fall back.

However this passage was too long, really too awfully long.....

Hai Dongqing looked at the paper flint of Yu Peiyu and sighed: "The flint will die out soon."

The flame of the flint was gradually becoming weaker and weaker. Zhu Lei'Er said hatefully: "Why are our clothes not made of paper!"

Yu Peiyu remembered that notebook he found in the Family Li Village, the same notebook Yu Fanghe was after. But Yu Peiyu did not notice anything strange about it, he even put

the notebook in water to see whether Zhu Mei used special ink to write.

However Yu Peiyu knew that Yu Fanghe would not burn down an entire village for an empty notebook, so he kept it in his robe ever since.

Finally that notebook could be put into use, he took it out and thought that every page could be used slowly. But the strange thing was that the pages did not catch fire. In fact the normal blank pages were covered with characters now.

Zhu Lei'Er cried out with surprise: "Why...why isn't it burning?"

Yu Peiyu suppressed his surprise with difficulty and said: "I think the pages are wet."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Why?"

Yu Peiyu said: "It must be my sweat."

Zhu Lei'Er stayed quiet for some time and said: "You're right everyone is bound to be anxious in a position like this. It is only natural that you would sweat."

Iron Blossom said: "Now the flint has died out too. What can we do?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What CAN we do? Feel free to suggest anything! Why did you lot insist on using that paper flint earlier?"

Iron Blossom retorted: "But...but that was your idea."

Zhu Lei'Er shouted: "Why did you listen to my idea? Why didn't you listen to Yu Peiyu's plan? It is your own fault that you are trapped in here!"

Suddenly Iron Blossom heard someone crying softly, it was Zhu Lei'Er.

Hai Dongqing said coldly: "It is a pity that tears cannot provide fire, otherwise all of us could sit here and cry."

Zhu Lei'Er got back up and shouted: "Who says I am crying? Why should I cry? Although we can't see a thing we can still walk."

Yu Peiyu said: "Exactly! I will hold brother Hai's hand, you hold his hand and Iron Blossom will hold your hand. That way we will not be separated from each other."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I rather hold on to the paw of a dog than hold his hand."

Iron Blossom said: "Alright, I will hold his hand and you will hold my hand."

Zhu Lei'Er grunted.

She held out her hand into the direction of Iron Blossom's voice and held on to a hand, it was not too big and not too small. She guessed it was the hand of Iron Blossom.

Suddenly Hai Dongqing laughed: "You're holding on to the paw of a dog."

Zhu Lei'Er was shocked and wanted to let go but did not, she smiled: "At least you're grand enough to admit it."

The girl who was sad and crying was now smiling again, who can stay angry with a girl like that.

Yu Peiyu lead the way and used his other hand to touch the wall to move forward, he also noticed that the wall was really rough like it was built in a hurry.

They walked for a very long time, and were looking for subjects to talk about. Because if you cannot see a thing at least you would like to hear some sound.

But in the end everybody ran out of subjects to talk about, even Zhu Lei'Er was surprised that she did not know what to talk about anymore.

Everyone was exhausted and desperate, their only hope was that the exit would soon appear before them.

After walking for some time Zhu Lei'Er tripped over something and she dragged along Hai Dongqing in her fall.

Iron Blossom asked with fear: "What is it?"

Nobody answered her, she shouted loudly: "Why won't anyone answer me?"

But in fact everybody knew what that was, but they did not want to admit it. In the end Yu Peiyu said: "It is a chest."

Iron Blossom repeated: "A chest.....a chest.....The same chests we left behind?"

She mustered all her courage to say those words and when she heard Yu Peiyu say: "Yes, they are." She was completely gone, she called out and sat down with despair.

It felt like they walked for seven, eight hours and in the end they came back where they started.

Zhu Lei'Er sat down, she was exhausted too and she had no hope of getting out anymore. Nothing in the world could make her walk again.

After some time Yu Peiyu said: "Guo Pianxian or Ji Lingfeng might have paper flints on them."

Zhu Lei'Er immediately jumped up and said: "Right! Why didn't we think of that earlier?"

She moved slowly into the direction of the chests and used her hands to guide herself to them. Iron Blossom wanted to do the same thing but suddenly she heard two sharp cr. It was Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu.

Iron Blossom asked with fear: "What is wrong?"

Zhu Lei'Er stuttered with fear:

"The.....the.....chests.....are....are....empty.... ..."

Iron Blossom jumped up and fell back again and said: "Empty.....? Could it be that they woke up and left themselves?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Impossible! The locks were forced open from the outside."

Iron Blossom said: "Could perhaps one of them had woken up and freed the others?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "No, all three locks were broken from the outside."

She tried her best to stay calm but her voice was trembling. They already guessed that someone else was here in this passage too, but they hope their own deduction was inaccurate. However this deduction became a fact now and this person was spying on them and was lurking about.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "Why won't he show himself to us?"

Hai Dongqing said: "Don't you understand?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "No, I don't."

Hai Dongqing said: "Because he wants us to slowly die in here."

Iron Blossom said fearfully: "But why? We have done nothing to him...."

Hai Dongqing said: "We have discovered his secret, for that alone we will have to die."

Suddenly they heard a series of strange noises like crying, sighing and sneering. This only made their spirits even more desperate and scared.

Iron Blossom smiled wryly: "Why scare us? We are already suffering now."

Hai Dongqing said: "Some people have difficulty staying quiet."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What and who do you mean with those words?"

Hai Dongqing laughed: "I'm just surprised how you can make those noises."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Some people don't have the courage to admit their own deeds and try to shift the responsibility to others."

Hai Dongqing said: "So you're shifting it to me now."

Zhu Lei'Er angrily said: "Are you deaf? That was a voice of a man!"

Hai Dongqing stayed quiet now and said after some time: "So it wasn't you?"

Zhu Lei'Er said with indignation: "Of course not! Who would make a silly joke like that now!"

Hai Dongqing said: "It wasn't me."

Iron Blossom stuttered with fear: "But if it wasn't you, who.....who...was....it....it?"

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "Wasn't it you?"

Iron Blossom quickly said: "Of course not! I'm scared out of my wits at this moment, I don't have the mood to scare other people at this time."

No one asked Yu Peiyu, because they knew Yu Peiyu would never make a meaningless joke like that. All of a sudden they were dumbstruck by fear, there was another fifth person near them now.

Nobody could see this fifth person and they had no idea where he was hiding.

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly loudly shouted: "Yes, I saw you already! Come out now, there is no point in hiding!"

Iron Blossom was shocked but immediately guessed that Zhu Lei'Er was using a ruse to lure that fifth person out.

She too loudly said: "Come out! There is no use in hiding now!"

Both of them loudly called out for some time, but nobody made an appearance. Their words had no impact on the fifth person but the two of them were breaking out in a cold sweat because of the fear.

Yu Peiyu slowly said: "There is no voice, you're just mistaken."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I....I heard it myself....."

Yu Peiyu said: "I did not hear a thing."

He suddenly held tightly to Zhu Lei'Er's hand and whispered: "Hold on to each other's hands. We will form a circle to surround him"

Zhu Lei'Er held Iron Blossom's hand and Iron Blossom held on to Hai Dongqing's hand. After walking forward seven, eight paces they did not encounter anyone.

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly said with shock: "Why is this place so broad now?"

The passage was quite narrow and with difficulty four persons could walk next to each other but no nobody could even touch the walls anymore of the passage.

Suddenly Iron Blossom pouted to Zhu Lei'Er: "Stop squeezing my hand so hard."

Zhu Lei'Er said with a slight indignation: "What? I did not do such a thing."

Hai Dongqing said: "It is not me."

Iron Blossom said with a sharp tone: "Yes, you're on my right side. But my left hand....."

She did not finish her sentence, she suddenly noticed that she was not holding on to Zhu Lei'Er's hand. Zhu Lei'Er herself also noticed that she was not holding Iron Blossom's hand. The hand they were holding was cold and hard.

Both let go and yelled: "Who are you?" And jumped backwards.

In the darkness they could hear some laughing.

The laughing came from between them and in an instant it came from metres away from them. Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom thought that this man could have killed them most easily when he was holding their hands and both broke out in a cold sweat again.

They could hear Yu Peiyu say: "This is not the same route we took earlier."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "But those boxes...."

Yu Peiyu said: "Those chests were moved over here to make us believe we have walked in a circle."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "What is this place?"

From a narrow passage they now were in a most strange and mysterious place.

Yu Peiyu did not answer he was thinking deeply about this.

Suddenly a voice said: "This is my home, it is quite alright. There is food and wine on the table, help yourselves."

The voice sounded sharp and soft like that of a child. Normally Zhu Lei'Er would be amused to hear this kind of voice but now it sounded like the cry of a ghost.

Suddenly the lamps here were lit and they saw that they were in a stone hall, although the light was not too bright but not having seen light for hours, the light made their eyes blink.

They saw about more than ten men in the hall, some were playing go others were reading and admiring paintings. Some were sitting behind a zither.

It looked very distinguished and refined, but these men wore worker's clothes and did not look like literary people.

A group of men were sitting at a table with food and drinks, they looked like ruffians but were sitting very elegantly and were gracefully holding a cup of wine. But both of them were not drinking.

Zhu Lei'Er never thought that there would be so many people here and was a bit shocked. Although these people did not look like martial arts experts, but their appearance here made them very mysterious. Nobody dared to look down upon them.

The voice of earlier spoke again: "The host has invited you, why so formal? Please join me." The voice came from the table with food and wine, the man was not very tall but wore a straw hat normal people would wear to protect themselves from the sun. This way his face was hidden from Yu Peiyu and others.

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "In that case, we will kindly oblige."

None of the other people moved and were quite indifferent to the coming of Yu Peiyu and others. Zhu Lei'Er was a bit angry by that.

There was four, five empty seats just enough for them.

Yu Peiyu sat down and smiled: "May I know your family name, sir?"

The speaker was still wearing his big straw hat and said: "We ask for my family name, since you are actually unexpected guests."

The other persons did not look at Yu Peiyu and the others at all, and the host was not revealing his face and identity to them.

These people wore normal worker's robes but did have quite expensive hats decorated with pears.

Zhu Lei'Er said loudly: "Your clothes and hat are out of place, don't you all think so?"

She deliberately wanted to provoke an emotion from these lot.

Only the host answered, he smiled: "We should embrace everything we have whether it is expensive or cheap."

His clothes matched him perfectly, which made him rather the odd man out.

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Why won't you remove your straw hat?"

The man laughed: "You have very inquisitive, but shouldn't you be eating with your mouth instead of asking a lot

questions.”

Zhu Lei’Er said: “Not necessarily.”

The man laughed: “If you don’t eat, you will starve to death.”

Zhu Lei’Er said coldly: “If you tell me to keep silent and ever to talk again, I would rather die.”

Volume 8 - The Waters Subside and the Rocks Emerge

Chapter 36 : The Demon In The Underground Hell

Yu Peiyu looked most pensive and asked: "Madame, are you asking me to assassinate Mr. Dongguo?"

The woman in black said: "Although ambushing, assassinating are not the way of people in Wulin, but when we are facing a diabolical menace like Mr. Dongguo we cannot uphold conventional rules anymore."

Yu Peiyu said: "But.....but Jing Ke still failed in the end."

Zhu Lei'Er was telling the truth, Iron Blossom almost laughed out loud but she prevented herself from laughing.

The man with the big straw hat laughed: "Little Miss is right, when you cannot not speak that is most sad too. But eating is also anecessity in life. There is no poison in the food, pleas help yourselves."

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "If there is poison in the food I will be able to tell in an instant."

There is a plate of steamed salmon Zhu Lei'Er used her chopsticks to pick a part however she was unsuccessful, she used a bit more force and the entire fish broke into pieces. It was made from wax.

All the dishes were made from wax, Zhu Lei'Er was very bemused by this and wanted to scold the man with the hat. However she suddenly noticed Yu Peiyu looked awfully pale and Yu Peiyu said earnestly to the man with the straw hat: "I ask again, sir. What is your family name?"

The man was holding a cup the entire time in his hand but did not really drink, he seemed to be admiring the cup in his hand and the wine in it. He seemed to be oblivious to Yu Peiyu's question.

Zhu Lei'Er's temper was never really great and she immediately shouted: "Are you deaf!"

During her talking she poked out her chopsticks to the man's elbow's acupoint, she wanted him to drop his cup as to embarrass him.

But the pair of chopsticks pierced right through him and the man did not even yell in pain, [he] was made from wax too. All the other men were made from wax also.

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised and after a moment she scoffed: "At least there is one real man here."

But when they looked up the only living man was gone too and only the big straw hat was on the table.

Zhu Lei'Er shivered but scoffed: "That is why these figures wear old clothes but wear big new hats."

She now figured out that that man was playing a joke on them and dressed up these wax statues and had them wear big hats to cover their faces.

She removed the hats of all the wax figures and saw that all of them looked most lifelike.

Zhu Lei'Er sighed: "No matter what, this man is really talented."

Hai Dongqing sighed too: "Even the famous sculptor Zhang of Beijing is nothing compared to this man."

Yu Peiyu said earnestly: "His martial arts are quite high too, none of us could see where he fled to?"

Iron Blossom said: "Are....are all these wax statues?"

There were more than ten lifelike statues in this stone hall, they were so lifelike that it became creepy.

Yu Peiyu asked her: "What is he doing?"

He pointed at a wax figure, Iron Blossom answered: "He is playing the zither."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Have you heard the zither?"

The entire hall was silent.

Iron Blossom said: "But why did he make all these statues and put them here."

Zhu Lei'Er said coldly: "Perhaps he was just feeling lonely." She added with a smile: "At least wax figures are better than real men."

Iron Blossom asked: "Why?"

Zhu Lei'Er answered: "At least wax statues cannot attack us."

Iron Blossom felt most uncomfortable here, but after hearing Zhu Lei'Er she was a bit reassured and was not that afraid anymore. And Zhu Lei'Er was right, wax figures cannot form a threat.

But Yu Peiyu said earnestly: "We cannot stay here, let us leave immediately."

He looked most troubled and was very pensive ever since he arrived in this stone hall.

Zhu Lei'Er laughed: "Why? Real people can escape but these wax statues are harmless."

She walked over to a wax statue and smacked a wax statue on the face.

The wax statue was [reading] but after it got slapped it fell down and broke in little pieces.

She smiled: "You see, after being slapped he cannot return the favour." She looked at the broken pieces of the figure and smiled: "I am so sorry, are you hurt? Let me help you up."

She was still a small child in her heart, she never got the chance to play with dolls when she was little and she was really amused and interested in these big dolls.

Like a child playing she helped the broken figure up and smiled softly: "Be good! Let mother see where you are hurt."

Iron Blossom was very amused to see this, but suddenly she heard Zhu Lei'Er scream loudly and jumped away from the figure. She threw the broken figure away from her and it fell to the ground breaking it in smaller pieces.

Yu Peiyu quickly went over to her and asked: "Everything alright?"

Zhu Lei'Er hid behind him and pointed at the figure: "This....this figure has...has bones....."

Iron Blossom called out with surprise: "Bones?!? How can it be?"

But she too saw bones in the broken pieces of wax, Yu Peiyu picked up a piece of the wax statue and looked at it carefully. Suddenly his face changed and he looked like he wanted to vomit with disgust.

Zhu Lei'Er asked with concern: "Are you alright?"

Yu Peiyu took a deep breath and said slowly: "These are not figures of wax, but these are corpses and I think they build this secret tunnel."

Zhu Lei'Er asked with amazement: "What do you mean?"

Yu Peiyu sighed: "The person who ordered for the construction of this tunnel was afraid that they might reveal his tunnel to others, so when they finished the construction he killed them. And he poured hot wax over them and made them into these wax statues we see before us."

Zhu Lei'Er got goosebumps all over and said: "No wonder these statues look so lifelike."

Hai Dongqing sighed: "I thought it was strange that such lowly looking people would be this refined. If we would be more precise we should have seen this a long time ago."

Zhu Lei'Er gritted her teeth and said: "At that time we did not know that there would be such an evil, maniacal madman here."

Suddenly a voice crackled: "You're wrong, little Miss. I am not mad nor am I maniacal. I am a very friendly and benevolent man."

Everyone heard his laughter but could not hear where it came from precisely.

Zhu Lei'Er said angrily: "You don't have a conscience! You betrayed your conscience a long time ago."

The voice laughed: "I know building this tunnel was very hard for them, so when they finished I treated them to a good rest. They don't have to sweat again in their lives, without me they cannot enjoy such luxury like this. How can you say that I am evil?"

Zhu Lei'Er cursed: "You're not fit to be called a man! You're just some disgusting, revolting sick creature!"

She wanted to antagonize the man, so he would jump out and face them. However the man did not come out and stopped talking now.

Zhu Lei'Er said hatefully: "This is not a very big place, let us find him in here."

Iron Blossom said: "We should count ourselves lucky that he is leaving us alone, you want to find him?"

Yu Peiyu turned to Hai Dongqing and smiled: "Would you mind telling us everything now? There is no point in hiding anything now."

Hai Dongqing was taken by surprise by Yu Peiyu's remark and stuttered: "What.....what do you....you mean?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I really do not know why you and brother Yang want to lure me here."

Hai Dongqing said: "What are you saying? I did not lure you anywhere. Even I do not know what this place is and I certainly do not know that madman."

Yu Peiyu said: "Perhaps brother Hai really did not see this place before, but I think you must be acquainted with this

old sir.”

Hai Dongqing said anxiously: “How should I know him? I...I...have no reasons to lie to you.”

Yu Peiyu sighed: “I too do now know why brother Hai want to lie to me. Furthermore brother Hai’s tale about [Mr. Dongguo] was most convincing, I believed every word you said. But now I am beginning to doubt that story.”

Hai Dongqing said: “Why?”

Yu Peiyu said: “This old sir places a lot value to this tunnel, he is even prepared to kill for it. These ten poor odd men are the best example. Am I right?”

Hai Dongqing said: “Yes, exactly.”

Yu Peiyu said: “In that case, isn’t it strange that the cottage above is abandoned? Won’t an empty house in the middle of nowhere raise suspicion?”

Hai Dongqing was taken by surprise and stuttered: “Maybe...maybe....it was not empty....”

Yu Peiyu said: “Indeed the cottage was not empty, it was occupied. But where are the people?”

Hai Dongqing answered: “Perhaps they were killed by Yang Zijiang.”

Yu Peiyu smiled: “Would brother Yang really kill innocent people for a mere empty house?”

Hai Dongqing said: “This.....”

Yu Peiyu continued: “Furthermore the occupants were probably instructed to keep watch by this old sir, if brother Yang would kill them wouldn’t he know? Would he allow brother Yang to stay?”

Hai Dongqing said: “So brother Yu, you’re saying.....”

Yu Peiyu said: “I’m just saying that brother Yang and this old sir have already met. When he told us to flee into the tunnel, it was all premeditated.”

Hai Dongqing's face turned pale and said: "Why....why didn't he tell me? Why did he do this?"

Yu Peiyu looked at him carefully and asked: "Do you really not know, brother Hai?"

Hai Dongqing said: "I really do not know."

Yu Peiyu asked: "But why would you bring Miss Ji Lingfeng here?"

Hai Dongqing asked: "What does that have to do with this?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I thought it was strange why brother Hai would capture Ji Lingfeng. Capturing Zhong Jing and Guo Pianxian and delivering them to Madame Hai Tang, was just a ploy to win over the Baihua Association over. I couldn't figure out to whom you were going to deliver Ji Lingfeng. But now I know."

Hai Dongqing asked: "What? What do you understand?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Brother Hai captured Ji Lingfeng for the purpose of delivering her to this old sir."

Hai Dongqing said: "Why would I want to do that? Who is he? And why does he want Ji Lingfeng?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Maybe because of these wax figures, perhaps for different reasons altogether. I think brother Hai would be better informed about it than I."

Hai Dongqing took a deep breath and said: "I do not know what is going on here. But I know you're mistaken, I have nothing to do with this here. If brother Yu doesn't believe me, I will....."

Suddenly he was interrupted by two loud screams, Iron Blossom and Zhu Lei'Er screamed.

Two wax figures grabbed hold of them.

Zhu Lei'Er was terrified now but shrieked: "These two are not corpses, they are alive."

Iron Blossom almost fainted with fear and could not speak anymore.

One of the wax figures said: "If you want them alive, stay where you are!"

When he spoke bit and pieces of the wax fell off.

Yu Peiyu did not speak and did not move.

Hai Dongqing asked: "What do you want?"

That was a redundant question, even silly. But everyone in such situations is bound to say ridiculous things.

The two figures playing chess stood up and walked over with big paces, one of them said: "Whoever moves, the two girls die!"

Yu Peiyu sighed, before he could finish his sigh he was seized and someone sealed 17 of his acupoints.

Zhu Lei'Er shrieked: "Why are doing this? Don't let them capture you, because of me....."

She started weeping and did not finish her sentence.

A voice laughed: "Little Miss, do you know understand that wax figures are not inferior to real men. And can be more dangerous than real persons."

A old, short man with a big hat walked out, it was very strange big hat. Very out of touch with his seize and clothing making him look ridiculous. But nobody could laugh now.

Zhu Lei'Er started cursing: "You sick old man,....."

She cursed him with every expletives she knew, but the old man was not angered in fact he was pleased and amused by her.

And when Zhu Lei'Er stopped cursing he smiled: "Little Miss, you're good at crying and cursing. I like girls like you, after awhile I turn you into a beautiful wax figure. You will be most beautiful."

Zhu Lei'Er shouted: "You.....you....."

She wanted to curse him, but when she heard what he was going to do with her fear struck her in the chest.

The old man turned to Yu Peiyu and said: "Young man, are you Yu Peiyu?"

Yu Peiyu nodded and replied: "Yes, I am."

The old man chuckled: "Although we never met, I could recognize you in one go."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Although we have never met too, I know who you are too."

The old man was a bit stunned but laughed: "If you know who I am, you're quite capable."

Yu Peiyu said: "You're not a demon. You're just a corpse, because you died a very long time ago."

The old man laughed: "I am a corpse? Am I just a corpse?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, you are. You never saw me, but I did see you."

The old man asked: "Where did you see me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "In a grave."

Zhu Lei'Er looked at Yu Peiyu with amazement, she did not understand what Yu Peiyu was saying. She almost believed that Yu Peiyu had lost it.

However the old man's face turned and said: "You have been to the grave?" He looked at Yu Peiyu for some time.

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, I did. I even stayed there for some time."

The old man asked: "How did you escape?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I crawled out via your behind."

Now Zhu Lei'Er really believed Yu Peiyu had lost it, Iron Blossom and Hai Dongqing thought Yu Peiyu had gone mad.

The old man turned awfully pale now and yelled: "Granddaughter, come here!"

Everyone except Yu Peiyu was amazed to see his granddaughter, no one thought this old man's granddaughter was Ji Lingfeng. Yu Peiyu knew it had to be Ji Kuqing, who pretended to be dead years ago.

He was also very good at making wax statues, Ji Kuqing turned to Ji Lingfeng and asked: "Is it true, what this youngster is saying?"

Ji Lingfeng said: "I do not know."

She looks very weak and broken, but her reply was very resolute.

Ji Kuqing asked: "Did he go to Murder Manor?"

Ji Lingfeng answered: "If he did not visit Murder Manor I wouldn't know him. He is not the only one who went to Murder Manor."

Ji Kuqing laughed and softly touched Ji Lingfeng's cheek and said: "Good granddaughter, you should show more respect when talking to your grandfather."

Ji Lingfeng pouted: "I am tired, I just want to sleep now."

She turned around and walked away, she did not even look at Yu Peiyu the entire time.

Ji Kuqing said softly: "This girl must be spoilt rotten by her mother."

He turned to Yu Peiyu and looked at him for some time, before saying: "I hear that Yu Fanghe had a son called Yu Peiyu too."

Yu Peiyu said: "It seems so."

Ji Kuqing said: "It was said that he died in Murder Manor."

Yu Peiyu said: "I heard that too."

Ji Kuqing's eyes glittered and said slowly: "Perhaps he did not die, he just made a stroll in the grave and stayed alive and someone changed his appearances."

He suddenly grabbed Yu Peiyu's robe and said loudly:
"Maybe he is you, you are the son of Yu Fanghe."

Initially Yu Peiyu did not understand why Ji Lingfeng would lie, but now he understood and his hands were covered with sweat.

Ji Kuqing could be working together with the fake Yu Fanghe, they perhaps lured Yu Peiyu over here with the purpose of investigating whether the two Yu Peiyus were really one person.

Only two people knew of the change of appearance of Yu Peiyu, and Ji Lingfeng was one of them. Yu Peiyu did not know why she would conceal the truth from Ji Kuqing but he was very thankful to her.

Ji Kuqing looked at Yu Peiyu sternly and asked: "Are you the son of Yu Fanghe?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "Whose son I am is no concern of yours."

Ji Kuqing said: "If you admit your the son of Yu Fanghe, nothing will happen."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I beg your pardon, what do you want me to say again?"

Ji Kuqing looked sinister now and suddenly laughed loudly: "Young lad! You are very stubborn. If you don't like to tell the truth, I will make sure you will never speak again."

The stone hall was becoming warmer and warmer, there was big furnace and a large pot with wax was put on it to cook.

Ji Kuqing took out an metallic hook and stirred in the cettle of wax, the wax was becoming fluid. The damp coloured the face of Ji Kuqing green, making him look like a mad demon. He gradually had a mad look in his eyes and said: "It is not easy to turn a living person into a wax figure. Firstly, the wax must be poured onto the person when it is ready. The wax must be completely liquid but it must not be too hot. So timing is essential."

He chuckled: "It is similar to how Cantonese prepare oil chicken, your hands must be firm and you must be careful. You have to pour the wax carefully on the person and very precise. The first layer must be hardened then the second layer can only be applied. If even your hands are slightly unstable everything will be ruined."

He explained with great enthusiasm, like a famous chef telling people about his best recipe and dish.

However they are not the eaters, they are the chickens in this case. If chickens could really feel, would they feel the same thing as Yu Peiyu and others are feeling right now.

Zhu Lei'Er was angry, scared (perhaps similar what chickens might feel), she wanted to poke the eyes and hands of this horrible old man.

Iron Blossom was afraid she would go mad and shouted: "Just kill me now! Quickly!"

Ji Kuqing said calmly: "I want to create perfect wax statues in order to make perfect statues I need live persons. With corpses I cannot create perfect statues."

Iron Blossom screamed: "You.....you....."

She did not know what to say and choked on her words.

Ji Kuqing smiled to her: "Madame Yang, I won't trouble you. Don't be afraid! Also Yang Zijiang won't like to share the bed with a wax figure."

Hai Dongqing turned pale and said: "Yang Zijiang is really working with you?!?"

Ji Kuqing laughed: "Precise, he is smarter than you and knows to make the right friends. He picks the cook holding the knife and you picked to be friends with the chickens."

Hai Dongqing was stunned and after some time muttered: "Yang Zijiang, Yang Zijiang. Have you entirely forgotten about our teacher? How could betray our teacher like this, have you forgotten our teachings alltogether."

Tears flowed from his eyes.

Zhu Lei'Er said hatefully: "No wonder he was not afraid of those Shades! After he saw us off, all he had to do was explain to the Shades that he was one of them. That little fiend is capable of doing almost everything, the filthy hypocrite."

Iron Blossom started crying half way when she heard the words of Zhu Lei'Er.

Zhu Lei'Er scoffed: "Madame Yang, why are you crying? Having a husband like Yang Zijiang you should feel happy."

Iron Blossom sobbed: "I....I...."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I just want to ask you to take this Madame Yang away, I can't stand the sight of her."

Ji Kuqing smiled: "I almost forget, thank you for reminding me. I have to invite Madame Yang to take a seat."

Iron Blossom screamed: "Do not touch me! I am not the wife of Yang Zijiang! I will rather become a wax figure than become his wife! I will never become the wife of a vicious man like that."

Ji Kuqing said casually: "I don't care who you are, but I control life and death of whoever enters this place."

Hai Dongqing looked at Yu Peiyu and said sadly: "I was wrong about Yang Zijiang, please forgive me.....me for dragging you into this."

Yu Peiyu said: "This is his fault, you're not responsible for this. You needn't apologize."

Hai Dongqing sighed: "No matter what, he and I are brothers. I.....I....."

Ji Kuqing loudly yelled now: "Quickly hoist the cettle, this is the right time."

The wax was ready.

Ji Kuqing laughed: "The first layer would hurt a lot, young master Yu can stand a lot of pain I hear. Well, anyway after the second, third layer is brought on you won't feel the pain anymore."

He put a stick into the wax and showed Yu Peiyu and others how the wax slowly hardened. Ji Kuqing muttered: "Exactly how I want it. Remove the clothes of Yu Peiyu immediately."

Zhu Lei'Er yelled: "Why won't you start with me first?"

Ji Kuqing laughed: "It will be your turn sooner or later, why so anxious."

Zhu Lei'Er screamed: "I'm begging you start with me! I will be most grateful if you would fulfill this wish."

Ji Kuqing laughed: "You like to be naked in front of them?"

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned and started to cry.

Iron Blossom yelled: "You can start with me! I....I am no....not afraid!"

Ji Kuqing carefully examined her and said slowly: "You have a good figure, I would love to start with you. It would be most wonderful to see a naked pretty woman like you. Very good.....very good indeed."

But he added with a sigh: "Unfortunately you're the wife of Yang Zijiang, pity.....pity...."

Hai Dongqing screamed: "You old sick monster, old bastard! Son of a b-i-t-c-h-!"

Ji Kuqing laughed: "You are trying to make me angry so I will turn you into wax first."

Hai Dongqing yelled: "Start with me if you have the nerves!"

Ji Kuqing smiled: "Since all of you are such good friends, I will make your wish come true!"

He added with a maniacal smile: "Remove their clothes and place them together. Let them embrace each other! I will

make a very special wax sculpture, everyone will be able to see that they are friends in one go.”

Hai Dongqing and Zhu Lei’Er both screamed, Zhu Lei’Er had encountered a lot of life and death experiences too but until now she has never been afraid.

Yu Peiyu was still silent, but he was furious and he was also very sad. Why did he have to die in this horrible way.

If he knew he would die this horribly, he would preferred to die at the hands of Sang Erlang, although that man was mad too. At least he wasn’t a sexually frustrated sick old man like Ji Kuqing. Not even Sang Erlang could come up with such sick twisted method of killing.

Suddenly a man flew in very fast and was sort of dancing gracefully like a puppet being pulled by a invisible strings.

Ji Kuqing looked surprised and shouted: “Who is it?”

The man kept dancing and knocked over the cettle with hot wax (un)intentionally and he was covered with the wax and screamed loudly and painfully. Everyone was dumbstruck by fear when they heard the screaming of this man. A few drops of hot wax landed on Zhu Lei’Er and it was enough to cause intolerable pain. Another man flew in and landed in the cettle and he shouted with pain too.

Ji Kuqing flew away to avoid being splattered by the wax and shouted angrily: “Who is it?”

During his shout a third person came flying towards him, he shifted away from the flying living object with a few centimetres mid-air. With was an amazing accomplishment, however a fourth and a fifth man came flying towards him too. Even with his incredible level in the art of levitation he could not avoid these two men.

The movements in the art of levitation are dependent from one puf of internal energy qi. When in mid-air it is impossible to change or inhale another puf of qi, changing position in mid-air is already most difficult.

Ji Kuqing struck out his fists and his energy released repelled the two flying men but he too was flung backwards and staggered back to the wall.

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised and happy to see this, she recognized those five men as the wax henchmen of Ji Kuqing. She was ambushed by these figures earlier, although they had the element of surprise but she knew they were not weak fighters and had swift movements.

But now these five henchmen were thrown inside and it seemed they did not even have the opportunity to put up any resistance. This unexpected guest must have great skills.

Ji Kuqing looked very angry and looked at Yu Peiyu, he said: "I never thought you would have helpers to rescue you. You have a lot of friends!"

A voice said: "I do not know him, but we are old friends."

The sound sounded soft and gentle, and very sweet. Zhu Lei'Er and Iron Blossom were also captivated by the voice of this guest. Zhu Lei'Er was the daughter of the famous Zhu Mei, she was born with a certain grace, beauty, elegance inherited from her mother. The other was Iron Blossom was one of the Three Magnificent Flower Ladies, (in)famous for their mesmerizing skills. Her voice was a special weapon against men too. But when they heard this voice they felt they could not compare to her and kept quiet.

But when Zhu Lei'Er heard these two were friends, her heart sank away again.

But only Hai Dongqing was extremely happy and said softly: "My teacher has arrived."

Zhu Lei'Er was surprised and said with amazement: "Your teacher is a woman."

Hai Dongqing did not answer her question, there is no need to answer because a woman in a black dress gracefully walked in. She wore a black veil in front of her face,

although Zhu Lei'Er could not see her face but she knew this woman must be a matchless beauty.

This woman slowly walked inside, it seemed like she was floating on air instead of walking, she wore a long black dress and one could only see the tips of her shoes if one looked very careful. She also wore black gloves, Zhu Lei'Er was captivated by her elegance and stood there looking at this woman with amazement.

She completely forgot where she was for the moment, she had only eyes for this strange woman.

Ji Kuqing was completely taken by surprise and after awhile said: "It is you!"

The woman in black said calmly: "Are you surprised?"

Ji Kuqing sighed: "I thought you were dead a long time ago."

The woman in black did not reply, but it looked like she smiled faintly. She slowly walked over to Ji Kuqing, this place looked awful, corpses everywhere, wax, strange statues but this woman maintained her gracefulness despite all of this. She did not lose her dignity in front of this old maniacal madman. Nobody could guess that this woman was an extremely powerful martial arts expert and nobody would think she killed those five men earlier.

Ji Kuqing was beginning to sweat and said with an enforced smile: "We haven't seen each other for more than ten years, you do not wish to fight me."

The woman in black said: "I have no intention indeed to fight you."

Ji Kuqing seemed to be relieved and said: "Please would you mind staying away from me, with you around my heart will always beat faster."

The woman replied: "You do not have a heart, how can it beat."

She was still advancing forward to Ji Kuqing.

Ji Kuqing was feeling very nervous and shouted: "What do you want from me?"

The woman in black did not answer his question but asked: "You are 72 years old now, aren't you?"

Ji Kuqing said: "You....you remember very clearly."

The woman in black said calmly: "Anyone who has reached the age of 72 has lived long enough, don't you agree?"

Ji Kuqing wiped away his sweat and asked: "What....what do you mean with that?"

The woman in black asked: "Do you honestly not know?"

Ji Kuqing smiled wryly: "Who has been able to know your intentions in the past 20 years?"

The woman in black sighed softly: "I hope you won't force me to kill you."

Ji Kuqing looked very afraid now and awfully pale, he suddenly laughed loudly: "After seeing all these years, you really want to take my life!"

His laughter sounded like crying, however at this time he leapt up and in mid-air he did not look like a disgusting skinny, short old man but a vulture crashing down on its prey.

The woman in black just slowly awaited his attack, if the Ji Kuqing was a vulture she could be called a wolf.

When Ji Kuqing was almost near her, she gently brushed with her sleeve.

Nobody expected that a mere twirl with the sleeve could block Ji Kuqing's vicious attack, however they heard a sharp cry and Ji Kuqing was flung almost 10 metres away from the woman in black. He crashed into the wall with his back, he looked very pale now and looked at the woman in black and said: "Seraphic energy...."

Before he could finish he coughed up blood.

The woman in black said calmly: "Yes, you are right. It is the pre-heaven seraphic energy, you really do have sharp eyes."

Ji Kuqing started to laugh arrogantly: "Pre-heaven seraphic energy! Good, invincible throughout the realm! I can die with no regrets now."

During his laughter he started to move his hands and legs frantically, like he was dancing. During his erratic movements he kept coughing up blood, his blood splattered all around him and on his own robe. In the end he ran out of blood to cough and slowly started to make a gargling sound and Zhu Lei'Er turned around and did not look.

Yu Peiyu had heard of pre-heaven seraphic energy before, but he always believed it belonged to legends of Wulin. Much like terms like [shooting invisible sword energy from one's fingers, silent acoustic voice], perhaps these skills did exist in the ancient times but were lost in the present era of realm of martial arts.

He never dreamt that he could see the power of such a famous art. Ji Kuqing was lying in his own pool of blood, like a frog he was still make a gargling sound. Suddenly his body jumped up in the air and fell down again, this time there was no gargling noise and he did not move anymore.

The woman in black turned around and looked at Yu Peiyu, her eyes were most penetrating and it seemed that she could see right through Yu Peiyu. He lowered his head and did not dare to look at this woman in black.

The woman in black asked: "Are you young master Yu Peiyu?"

She knew the name of Yu Peiyu and she was quite polite to him, if another person was standing in Yu Peiyu's shoes he would be very happy and even thrilled.

Fame was comparable to an expensive, precious brocade, it can bring one a lot of attention but also there is a downside to it.

Hai Dongqing saw that Yu Peiyu was contemplating and did not hear his teacher's words, so he said: "Brother Yu, my teacher is talking to you."

Yu Peiyu sort of woke up from his thoughts and said: "Yes, my name is Yu Peiyu."

The woman in black said: "Good, follow me please."

She gently brushed with her sleeve again and the acupoints of Yu Peiyu, Hai Dongqing and Zhu Lei'Er were unsealed.

Hai Dongqing knelt down and said: "Disciple has something....."

The woman in black interrupted him: "I know everything about you and Yang Zijiang, there is no need to talk about that right now."

She turned around and was standing at the door already.

Zhu Lei'Er quickly walked over to Yu Peiyu and held his arm and ask softly: "Are you really going with her?"

Yu Peiyu noticed her hands were shaking and his heart was filled with affection, he said gently: "Of course, you will be coming with me."

Zhu Lei'Er's eyes brightened up and she even held Yu Peiyu's arm tighter and asked sweetly: "Will you really take me everywhere you go?"

Yu Peiyu sighed in his heart but said: "No matter where I go you will always be at my side."

But the woman in black said: "This time you cannot go with him."

Zhu Lei'Er was startled and let go of Yu Peiyu, after a moment she said with a shaky voice: "Why?"

The woman in black said: "Because I say so."

Zhu Lei'Er said with indignation: "Why....what authority do you have to separate us from each other! You....you.....saved

our lives, but if it wasn't your disciple we wouldn't be in this mess."

She now started to weep and continued with a sobbing tone: "You should have saved us, it was your responsibility. What right do you have to order me around."

Hai Dongqing turned pale and knelt down, he said: "She is just a child, she doesn't know any better. Master, please forgive her."

Zhu Lei'Er looked up with tears in her eyes and said loudly: "You don't have to plead to your teacher! I am not afraid, let her kill me! Even when I'm dead I will follow Yu Peiyu."

She pulled Yu Peiyu's arm and said: "You promised me to take me everywhere you go, are.....are you coming back on your words?"

Yu Peiyu did not speak, he looked at her with affection and gently wiped away her tears and he turned around and said to the woman in black: "I promised her and her third uncle to take care of her. I cannot leave her behind."

The woman in black said coldly: "If you cannot look beyond mere love tribulations, how can you accomplish important matters in life."

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "If I cannot keep my word, how am I going to face myself in the future."

The woman in black looked at him for some time and her eyes turned warm and said: "Good! You're a good child!"

She floated towards Zhu Lei'Er and raised her hand.

Hai Dongqing and Yu Peiyu both held their breaths, they knew that the woman in black could smash Zhu Lei'Er's head with only one mere blow.

The woman in black asked: "Do you really want to stay with him?"

Zhu Lei'Er gritted her teeth and said resolutely: "No matter what I will stay with him, if you want to separate us kill me

first.”

Yu Peiyu looked at the hand of the woman in black and his heart skipped a beat.

The woman in black gently stroked Zhu Lei’Er’s long hair and said gently: “You’re a very kind sweet child. But if you truly love him you should not create more problems for him, give him the chance to finish his important quests first.”

Zhu Lei’Er was surprised and started to cry loudly.

The woman in black added: “I am not telling him that he should abandon you forever, just spend some time apart from each other. The two of you are still young, you will bound to see each other again in the near future.”

Zhu Lei’Er turned around and said: “Allright! I will leave, I will leave alone.....”

She ran towards the door sobbing, Yu Peiyu chased her and grabbed her arm and said gently: “Where are you going?”

Zhu Lei’Er bit her lip and said: “No need to concern yourself about me, I will find a place to go.”

But she could not hold back her tears no matter how hard she tried.

The world is a big place, but where can she go to?

The woman in black sighed: “Dongqing, take her back to our mount. I will tell young master Yu to look for her there afterwards.”

Hai Dongqing was surprised and happy, he said: “Are you accepting this Miss as your disciple?”

The woman in black smiled a bit: “She is a good girl.”

The weather outside was most radiant, although it was Autumn but it felt like Spring. For the first time in a long time Yu Peiyu felt that the warmth of the sun again.

Everything is different now, Zhu Lei’Er has new hope now. Standing in the warm sun, he could almost sing out of

happiness.

The only regret is that he could not find Guo Pianxian and Zhong Jing, Ji Lingfeng was also missing. She must have taken those two along, he still could not figure out why Ji Lingfeng helped him and why she took Guo Pianxian and Ji Lingfeng with her.

But that is only a small matter compared to the rest.

The woman in black said: "Although Yang Zijiang has betrayed me but he was honest about a certain few matters. And with Dongqing at his side he had no option but to be honest."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Is Ji Kuqing that [Mr. Dongguo]?"

The woman in black said: "No, Ji Kuqing is just another of Mr. Dongguo's lackeys. When it comes to martial arts and intelligence Ji Kuqing is nowhere near Mr. Dongguo."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Madame, you....."

The woman in black sighed: "To be honest, not even I am capable of defeating that rogue."

Yu Peiyu said: "But Madame, you have mastered the pre-heaven seraphic energy, aren't you invincible with that omnipotent skill?"

The woman in black said: "The pre-heaven seraphic energy is capable of penetrating practically everything, however everything in this world has something to match it. For instance a centipede is very poisonous but a rooster is capable of eating it."

The woman in black sighed: "Mr. Dongguo has learnt a new technique that can top my seraphic energy, if not he would not dare to wreak havoc again."

Yu Peiyu was most surprised and asked: "What skill would that be?"

The woman in black said: "The ephemeral form dexterity."

Yu Peiyu said: "If he has mastered this ephemeral form dexterity, can he truly run amok throughout the realm?"

The woman in black said: "Nobody in the realm is likely to be his match, there is only one person capable of dealing with him."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Who?"

The woman in black answered: "You."

Yu Peiyu was flabbergasted and stuttered: "But....but...I....I...."

The woman in black said: "When it comes to martial arts you are no match for him, not even ten Yu Peiyus might be able to defeat him. But you are both very intelligent and insightful, furthermore you have an exceptional tenacity that no one else has."

Yu Peiyu said: "But....."

The woman in black interrupted him: "Have you heard of the tale *the emperor and the assassin?"

{*Note: Warring States Period (403-221 BC). The emperor and the assassin is a famous historical story that took place in the final years of this period.}

Yu Peiyu answered: "Yes, I have heard of this story."

The woman in black said: "When it came to swordsmanship Jing Ke was nowhere near the great swordsman of that time [Gai Nie], but prince Dan of Yan Kingdom selected Jing Ke for the task to assassinate Ying Zheng king of the Qin Kingdom. Because prince Dan believed only Jing Ke was fit for such a task. Do you know why?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Because Jing Ke was willing to sacrifice his own life to complete his mission, he wanted to die along with the ruthless Qin Kingdom."

The woman in black shook her head and said: "You are wrong."

She added: "The ruthless methods of the King Zheng of Qin were infamous, lots of people hated him and wanted his head. And in the Kingdom of Yan there were a lot of brave warriors like [Gao Jianli, Song Yi, Wu Ping, Qin Wuyang]. All of them were heroic and courageous warriors who did not fear death, but why did prince Dan select Jing Ke?"

Yu Peiyu stayed quiet and respectfully listened to the woman in black.

The woman in black continued: "That is because Jing Ke had extraordinary tenacity, he was able to stay calm and logical during the most dire situations. King Zheng of Qin was known for being an awesome man, everyone who entered the Qin palace would quickly be intimidated by the awe there. However Jing Ke calmly entered the palace without showing a trace of fear or anxiety, even a cunning ruler like Ying Zheng did not see the assassination coming. Jing Ke had something special that many lacked and that was why prince Dan chose him."

Yu Peiyu looked most pensive and asked: "Madame, are you asking me to assassinate Mr. Dongguo?"

The woman in black said: "Although ambushing, assassinating are not the way of people in Wulin, but when we are facing a diabolical menace like Mr. Dongguo we cannot uphold conventional rules anymore."

Yu Peiyu said: "But.....but Jing Ke still failed in the end."

The woman in black said: "Jing Ke did fail, but you stand a better chance than Jing Ke."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Why do you say that, Madame?"

The woman in black explained: "There were about a thousand armed soldiers in the Qin palace, Mr. Dongguo likes to travel alone, that is one. Jing Ke was not skilled in close range combat with a dagger but you are already a martial arts expert of the realm, that is two." She paused for awhile and looked at Yu Peiyu and continued: "But most

important king Zheng still did not entirely trust Jing Ke when he presented the map, but Mr. Dongguo will not be suspicious of you.”

Yu Peiyu asked: “Why so?”

He added: “Jing Ke had at least [the map of Du Rong] and the head of Fan Yuqi to buy King Zheng’s trust, but I do not have anything to present to Mr. Dongguo.”

The woman in black smiled: “You have something to win his trust, but you do not know it yourself.”

Yu Peiyu said respectfully: “Madame, please enlighten me.”

The woman in black asked: “Do you still have those items Lady Zhu of the Palace of Enchantment hid?”

Yu Peiyu replied honestly: “Yes, I have.”

The woman in black’s eyes glittered and asked: “Is there a plaque made from bamboo?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Yes.”

The woman in black asked: “Do you still have it now?”

Yu Peiyu answered: “Fortunately I still have it.”

The woman in black said: “This is not an ordinary bamboo plaque, many people are willing to die for this piece of wood. It is more valuable than all the gold in the world in some people’s eyes, do you know why?”

Yu Peiyu said: “I could not figure the secret out of this bamboo plaque, Madame.”

The woman in black said: “This is a personal item of Mr. Dongguo.”

Yu Peiyu exclaimed with surprise: “His personal item?”

The woman in black said: “Whoever holds this plaque becomes the benefactor of Mr. Dongguo. No matter what task you give him, he must accomplish it.”

Yu Peiyu was very surprised and asked: “Why?”

The woman in black explained: "Mr. Dongguo is a very evil and cunning fiend, but he is also very proud. He does not like to accept favours from anyone but if he did he will try to repay that person back no matter how. About 30 years ago someone did him a great favour but that person had nothing to ask of Mr. Dongguo. As result Mr. Dongguo carved this bamboo plaque and said: [See this plaque is like seeing me.]"

Yu Peiyu said: "I understand now, but who was that person who held this plaque originally?"

The woman in black said: "That is of no importance, he is long dead now. Most importantly you have the plaque now and Mr. Dongguo said himself [See this plaque is like seeing me], so you have now become his benefactor. You can order him to do anything and he won't refuse you."

She casually added: "As I said, he is an extremely proud man and will never go back on his own words."

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "Madame, are you suggesting that I should go and see him with this plaque and order him to chop off his own head?"

The woman in black laughed: "Although he won't go back on his words, but telling him to kill himself to repay you is something he won't do either. Maybe 30 years ago he might have done that, but the older one gets the more value one places on life."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What do you suggest, Madame?"

The woman in black said: "Take this plaque and see him and ask him to teach you the ephemeral form dexterity."

Yu Peiyu asked: "And then?"

The woman in black said: "Learning the ephemeral form dexterity is nothing something that can be accomplished in two, three days. When you study with him, you have more opportunities to make contact with him."

Yu Peiyu nodded.

The woman in black added: "Not being able to repay this favour is his biggest regret in life, and if you see him you are helping him to complete one of his long wishes in life. He will be extremely happy and probably won't ask about your antecedents. He won't be suspicious about you, furthermore as the saying goes: [Even a tiger will be negligent once in awhile.] And at that time you have plenty of chances to kill him."

Yu Peiyu said: "But...."

The woman in black interrupted him: "You already know the secrets of Dongguo. Why do you have so many reservations? Are you not willing to rid Wulin of this rogue? Don't you want to avenge your father?"

Yu Peiyu was surprised and asked: "Madame, you know of me antecedents?"

The woman in black smiled: "Do you know who that person was who changed your looks?"

Yu Peiyu said sadly: "I will never forget the gratitude the old sir has bestowed me, however I do not even know the name of the old sir."

The woman in black said: "His own antecedents are quite mysterious and has not used his true name for decades. However I can reveal to you that he is probably the best friend I have. Together with him we were able to scare Mr. Dongguo from wreaking havoc all these years, because old Dongguo feared the both of us. Even if he had mastered the ephemeral form dexterity the two of us can still defeat and kill him, but....but...."

She did not finish her sentence but sighed.

Yu Peiyu quickly asked: "But what, Madame? Has...has something happened to the old sir?"

The woman in black looked very sad and was panting heavily now, after a long time she sighed deeply: "I fear he has been killed by Dongguo."

She quickly continued: "I do not have evidence of this, but if he was still alive old Dongguo would not be this bold.

Because Dongguo knows my good friend is not alive anymore he has begun to put his evil plans into action."

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and said: "Madame, I will obey your command without any doubt. But this Mr. Dongguo must live somewhere very remote, how can I find him."

The woman in black said: "No need for you to find him, he will be looking for you."

Yu Peiyu said: "Madame, are you suggesting that I would openly announce that the plaque of repay has fallen in my hands?"

Chapter 37 : The Yama Book Of Debts

A mistake made in an instant and it keeps haunting one for the rest of one's life. It is not fair and even wicked. If Yi Kun did not feel remorse he would not have committed suicide. Since he did feel remorse why can't we forgive him? Yu Peiyu was saddened and said softly: "I was wrong.....I am wrong....."

The woman in black said: "When Mr. Dongguo finds out that you are in possession of the plaque of repay, he will be bound to look for you."

Yu Peiyu said: "But Mr. Dongguo has said that he will help out whoever is in possession of that plaque, before I can personally hand the plaque back everyone can steal it from me."

The woman in black said: "But who is capable of stealing that plaque from you?"

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly: "I am not being modest here, but there are a lot of martial arts experts in the realm."

The woman in black said: "You're right. With your present skills there are to my knowledge about 13 people who can defeat you. Possibly even more but most of these experts are in retreat and when they hear the news they will probably come out and try to steal that plaque from you. Even by all means necessary."

She did not give Yu Peiyu time to ask and added with a smile: "But you have the Yama Debt Book of Lady Zhu, why should you be afraid of them."

Yu Peiyu said with surprise: "Yama Debt Book?"

The woman in black said: "You have the plaque of gratitude, how can you not have the book of debts."

Yu Peiyu seemed to understand and said: "Madame, are you referring to that black notebook?"

The woman in black said: "Indeed." She paused for a short moment before adding: "Everyone is bound to make mistakes in life, even sages are not perfect. In this short lifetime one is sure to err occasionally, especially famous people. We see their glory and their high status and the ever so mighty grandeur of them, are we aware how many people were sacrificed to gain that glory and wonderful status."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply too, because he too knew the road to fame was not easy and when one reaches that point the road is probably full of corpses.

The woman in black said: "For instance, Hong Shengqi was able to become the leader of the Fengwei (Phoenix tale) Association, because he framed his elder martial arts brother and poisoned his teacher. This secret leaked out eventually, but before this secret was uncovered everyone believed that Hong Shengqi was an awesome true hero."

Yu Peiyu still did not speak and sighed softly.

The woman in black continued: "Hong Shengqi was just unlucky that his secret was exposed. Many similar events happen all the time in the realm but we are just unaware of it."

Yu Peiyu said: "If one does not want someone to know about something, one should not have done it in the first place. Crimes like that will be solved in the end, no matter what."

The woman in black said: "True! Every secret is bound to be solved one time. However the person who accumulated most secrets is Zhu Mei of the Palace of Enchantment."

Yu Peiyu looked surprised.

The woman in black explained: "Lady Zhu kept every men spellbound with her beauty and she had numerous lovers. And men are most vulnerable when they are lying on a bed with a beautiful woman next to him."

She said it rather indirectly but one could easily imagine what situation would arise. It is the truth that most men cannot really keep any secrets hidden when there is a beautiful woman lying next to him gazing at him with pretty eyes.

The woman in black said: "Lady Zhu suddenly was overwhelmed with secrets, she carefully wrote every secret down in a black notebook. Secrets of her lovers, admirers or mysteries those people overheard, found out and told her about it to gain her love and grace. She was a very intelligent woman and knew that every secret was invaluable, so she carefully protected her notebook because she knew that these secrets would be useful some day."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "In the end she did not use those secrets."

The woman in black said: "That is because she became stupid suddenly."

Yu Peiyu said: "Stupid?"

The woman in black said: "Yes, stupid."

She continued: "There are two types of stupid people in this world, the first one type are old men who fall in love with young girls. Some of those old men are very intelligent men and had seen the world. But because of a mere young girl with pretty face, they do the most foolish, stupid things and lose everything they worked so hard to gain in life. They are very sad but nobody feels sad for them, in the end they were themselves to blame for their pitiful state."

Yu Peiyu smiled wryly, he too knew some of these tragic tales. Sometimes it was downright a farse.

The woman in black said: "The second type are women who fall head over heels in love. Normally smart women will become ignorant and dumb when they fall for a man completely. The man they love is a rogue, a thief, but in their eyes he is the most honest, likeable man on the world. Even

if he told her that the sun rises in the west or that snow is black, she will believe it.”

Yu Peiyu thought of Zhong Jing now and sighed deeply.

The woman in black sighed: “However Zhu Mei became even more stupid than these two types of people, she fell madly in love with a despicable, horrible little bastard who was so young that he could have been her son.”

Yu Peiyu sighed too: “Lady Zhu sacrificed a lot for this awful man, she of course did not want to use any incriminating secrets to blackmail her father-in-law.”

The woman in black said: “Indeed with your intelligence, you could put this notebook to good use and nobody will try to harm you.”

Yu Peiyu said: “But...”

The woman in black interrupted him: “I know what you are thinking. Everything in life has two sides, it really depends on the user. You should understand that.”

Yu Peiyu lowered his head and said: “Yes, I do.”

The woman in black smiled now: “This is all I have to say, go now. When you have completed your task we will meet again. Till that time I sincerely wish good luck with your mission.”

When Yu Peiyu’s back disappeared into the horizon, she was still standing there and as the sun was setting her facial expression changed. Her face suddenly changed awfully mysterious and eerie, she seems to have two identities in the day she is human. However in the night she turns into a [shade]. Another ghost krept towards her, it was the ghost of Ji Kuqing.

His clothes were still drenched with blood but his face was cleaned up now, his eyes were glittering wtih laughter and laughed loudly: “You have a lot to say today.”

The woman in black said casually: "To rid our troubles, I don't mind talking a bit more."

Ji Kuqing said: "Won't killing him be more easy?"

The woman in black shook her head: "You do not understand."

Ji Kuqing sighed: "I just don't understand why you want me to play dead earlier and left him alive....."

The woman in black said: "Only this way he will reveal his secrets to me."

Ji Kuqing asked: "Did he tell you?"

The woman in black said: "Yes, he admitted he was the son of Yu Fanghe, just like I thought that old dog was responsible for changing his face."

Ji Kuqing said: "Now you know, why leave him around?"

The woman in black shook her head and said: "You don't know, but soon everything will be clear to you..."

Ji Kuqing said: "I just hope you are right."

The woman in black said: "When was I ever wrong?"

She backed away from him and asked: "Where did all that blood come from anyway?"

Ji Kuqing laughed: "Even you think this is blood? It seems that my abilities are becoming better and better."

The woman in black smiled: "I was always impressed by your abilities."

Ji Kuqing asked: "How about your pupil?"

The woman in black said: "Hai Dongqing?"

Ji Kuqing said: "Yes."

The woman in black said: "He is taking Iron Blossom and Zhu Lei'Er back to my place."

Ji Kuqing asked: "Does he know about our plans?"

The woman in black said: "To succeed, the fewer people know about our plans the better."

Ji Kuqing asked: "How about Yang Zijiang?"

The woman black said: "In order to succeed, we must have a few scapegoats ready."

It was a chilly Autumn day, he travelled with extreme caution every day now. He thought that every day could be his last one, he was relieved when he managed to make through the day. He noticed that he looked very dirty and he wished he could change his robe and take a warm bath. But he did not have much money on him, when you're running from death one tends to forget the value of money quite easily.

Near dusk Yu Peiyu reached a small town, he used his remaining copper coins to buy four paper flints and two bowls of noodles. After that he had not a coin on him anymore.

Still he was very excited. Reading secrets of dignitaries of Wulin was most intriguing, being curious of other people's mysteries is also a rather nasty character trait of all humans.

Yu Peiyu left the town and found a remote place to shelter himself from the wind, he made a small fire and held the notebook near the fire. The characters slowly appeared.

Yu Peiyu was shocked to read the names on the notebook, everyone in the book were famous martial arts experts Yu Peiyu had heard of. Some were even more even more shocking: the lord of Nocturne City Dongfang Daming, Heavenly King Li, Granny Hu, master Nu, the Flying Hunchback Yi Kun, the celestial dragon swordsman.....

Besides the names of the ten great martial arts masters, also some of the 13 leaders of the orthodox schools were on the list. But three other names were most shocking to Yu Peiyu, namely Ji Kuqing, Feng San and his father Yu Fanghe. He could not believe his eyes, his father was righteous and fair

throughout his entire life it was impossible that he did something wrong in his life.

He did not want to look and did not want to believe it.

He also did not read about Feng San, Feng San was his brother and his good friend. Even if he did something wrong he did not want to read about it.

However he did not pass on Ji Kuqing, under the name Ji Kuqing were the characters [incest between brother and sister].

Yu Peiyu felt disgusted when he read that, he could not believe that such revolting things could actually be committed.

But he believed it was true, because he remembered the son of Ji Kuqing, Ji Zanghua. He was obviously a product of the sick revolting relationship between Ji Kuqing and his sister. But it was strange that Ji Lingfeng and Ji Lingyan looked normal, they did not inherit the bad genes from their sick, midget father Ji Zanghua.

Could it be that they were not the daughters of Ji Zanghua?

Yu Peiyu thought back when he was in that secret passage beneath Murder Manor, he found a piece of jade left behind by the lover of Madame Ji.

That piece of jade was a family heirloom of the Yu family, so her lover was someone of the Yu family without any doubt.

Could this be that secret of Yu Fanghe?

Yu Peiyu did not want to think about it, but he wanted to get to the bottom of this. So he flipped the page to Yu Fanghe. His hand was trembling and his heart was beating faster and faster.

Under the name of Yu Fanghe stood: [disowned his own brother and banned him from the family, his brother looks like a gentleman but is in fact a despicable murderous rogue].

Next to his father's name stood: [The elusive cloud a rogue of the north and brother of Yu Fanghe. Banned from his family when he was young because of his awful ways. The elder brother is a sage, but the younger brother is thug. Marvellous, marvellous].

Yu Peiyu broke out in a cold sweat when he read this. He remembered that he had a second uncle when he was very young, Yu Peiyu's mother was still alive that time whenever he asked about his second uncle his mother would look unhappy and stern. She would tell him that his second uncle was already dead and told him never to ask about his second uncle again.

Now he knows his second uncle is not dead, so the secret lover of Madame Ji could be his uncle. And the sister Ji Lingfeng and Ji Lingyan would likely be the daughters of that uncle of his. That perhaps also explained why Ji Lingfeng would often help him out and wanted him to join forces with her. In the end blood is really thicker than water.

Yu Peiyu was contemplating and was trying to digest the information he just read, after some time he heard a carriage coming his way.

In the dark Yu Peiyu could not see what was in the carriage but he could smell a very strong scent of herbs.

The man pushing the carriage was wearing a big dark outer robe, which is worn to protect oneself from rain.

In Sichuan province, there were many mountains and hills making transportation via carriage quite difficult. One could also find a lot herbs in the mountain range, and people from Sichuan are known herb collectors.

Nothing strange about this in the eyes of all and sundry, but Yu Peiyu was immediately suspicious.

From afar he could tell that the carriage was transporting something heavy, but herbs are not that heavy. It does not rain often in Sichuan and it was raining now, but this man

was still wearing a rain robe to protect himself. He was pushing an extremely heavy carriage with a lot of ease, by this alone this man must know martial arts. It was now night time but this man was still travelling at this hour, meaning he was making haste to go somewhere.

Yu Peiyu was not really interested in the affairs of others now, although he found a bit strange but he did not want to poke his nose into this matter.

But suddenly Yu Peiyu heard the galloping of a horse, a horse came his way and it was mighty fast. When the horse was about ten metres away from the carriage the rider leapt off the horse and made a somersault in mid-air and landed gracefully in front of the carriage.

The horse also stopped on its own, Yu Peiyu praised in his heart: An excellent rider and a wonderful steed.

The other man seemed to be oblivious to the rider and continued to push his carriage.

Yu Peiyu was sitting on the slope and when he heard the carriage he had already put out his fire, and in the dark both men could not see Yu Peiyu. Furthermore Yu Peiyu now positioned himself between some bushes to observe the two men.

The rider also did not notice when the carriage almost hid him, he stood there steady as a mountain.

Yu Peiyu saw that the rider was short and fat, he carried a long sword on his back making him look rather ridiculous.

But there was something about him, he had a rather powerful grandeur that made people look at him in awe. Although Yu Peiyu could not see his face clearly he had already guessed who this rider was. When the carriage bumped into him, the man also stopped pushing the carriage.

The rider laughed loudly: "Lord Ouyang, since when have you started to sell herbal medicine?"

The man pushing the carriage was the leader of the 72 branches of water heroes of the Changjiang River, Yu Peiyu thought he looked familiar but could not see his face clearly because he had covered his face.

Ouyang Long smiled: "Master Yu, you have sharp eyes. My respects." He removed his big straw hat and continued: "I thought that Master Yu was staying nicely at Hainan Isle, what brings you in these parts? Don't tell me that you have retired from being the leader of the Hainan School and have become a herb collector too?"

Yu Peiyu was sure of it now, this fat, short man was Yu Xuan, The Flying Fish and the Swift Sword. The leader of the Hainan School, Yu Peiyu saw him once during the gathering at Lake Huang. But it was coincidence that these two men met each other here in the remote skirts of Sichuan province.

What were they doing here and what were they up to?

Yu Xuan said: "Lord Ouyang, do you have an idea why I am here?"

Ouyang Long said: "Please enlighten me."

Yu Xuan smiled: "Lord Ouyang, I am here because of the same reason why you are in Sichuan."

Ouyang Long stayed quiet for awhile before taking out something from his robe, he asked: "Did Master Yu receive this too?"

He was holding an ordinary invitation card, there was nothing special to it, but it was strange that he was trembling when holding this invitation.

When Yu Xuan saw the invitation he stopped laughing too and sighed: "This year I am the unfortunate fool."

Ouyang Long laughed sadly: "This year, it is the 70th birthday of eighth squire Fu. He has sent you an invitation even though you live far, far away. That means that brother

Yu's fame and reputation is well-known throughout China, why would you say that you are an unfortunate fool?"

Yu Peiyu thought Yu Xuan's remark was strange too, if you are invited to attend to feast far, far away from you that usually meant your prestige and reputation were very high. And the person who invited you had a very high regards of you, furthermore with HainanSchool and Yu Xuan's status a gift would not be too much to be asked.

Yu Xuan laughed dryly: "Lord Ouyang is right, I should be happy that I am invited by eighth squire Fu, however after searching for two months I still could not find a suitable present for him."

Yu Peiyu felt this was very strange, I mean presents are not that important it is about the intention. Anything can be seen as a present, a piece of antique, tael of gold, silver, jewelry and even pastry, silk etc.

How come the leader of the HainanSchool is unable to find a present for this eighth squire Fu? Nobody would believe him.

Ouyang Long sneered: "Master Yu is both rich and powerful, everyone knows that in Wulin. If you would say that you are incapable of finding a present nobody would believe you."

Yu Xuan stayed quiet for awhile before asking: "Have you heard of a man called Deng Xuan?"

Ouyang Long said: "Of course even though I am not a well-informed man in Wulin, I still know that Lord Deng is the lord of the Purple Sand Isle, and one of the best friends of master Yu."

Yu Xuan asked: "Do you that he is dead for about a year?"

Ouyang Long was surprised and exclaimed with surprise: "What kind of illness did lord Deng contract?"

Yu Xuan said: "He was always very healthy and never even coughed, he did not die because of any illness."

Ouyang Long asked: "If he wasn't bedridden? Was he killed by someone?"

Yu Xuan said: "Yes, he was killed."

Ouyang Long said: "Lord Deng's pair of sun and moon wheels were said to be imparted by late master Dongfang Daming of Nocturne City, for the last couple of decades lord Deng was said never to have met a match. Who is capable of killing him?"

Yu Xuan said: "Eighth squire Fu."

Ouyang Long's face changed and did not speak anymore.

Yu Xuan said: "Last year Deng Xuan received an invitation to attend the birthday feast of eighth squire Fu, Deng Xuan searched for two days and finally found a piece of beautiful coral about one metre high. He was very pleased about it and thought his present would be the most eye-catching one, at least eighth squire fu would be happy."

Ouyang Long nodded and said: "Hmmm."

Yu Xuan continued: "When Deng Xuan presented his present to eighth squire Fu, he did say a word to Deng Yuan and lead him to chamber. When he opened that room Deng Yuan saw corals at least two to three metres tall."

Yu Xuan sighed: "When Deng Xuan saw this fear struck him into his chest, eighth squire Fu did not invite him to attend the feast and asked him to leave. He personally accompanied Deng Xuan out of his estate."

Ouyang Long asked: "What happened?"

Yu Xuan sighed again: "Deng Xuan hurried back home on his steed and when he reached home he coughed up blood and fainted. He himself did not know how he got injured, he only remembered that eighth squire Fu made a farewell gesture to him and he felt his chest was a bit warm."

Ouyang Long asked: "How...how many days till he got home?"

Yu Xuan said: "Seven days, he coughed up buckets of black blood and he died that very same night."

Ouyang Long stayed silent and looked very earnest, he softly said: "Very formidable Hundred Paces Divine Fist! Harming one without knowledge and dying of injuries after seven days.....Eighth squire Fu has really awesome martial arts."

Yu Xuan sighed: "Almost everyone in the realm knows that the invincible fists of eighth squire Fu are lethal, and if he doesn't like your present you might get a hit on the chest."

Ouyang Long looked at his cargo on the carriage.

Yu Xuan said: "With Deng Xuan serving as an example I do not dare to present my gift like that. When I received the invitation I immediately started to look for a present, but even now I could not find a present suitable enough to present to eighth squire Fu. Now there are only two days left before the birthday of eighth squire Fu, what should I do lord Ouyang?"

Yu Peiyu now understood what was going on, he was quite bemused by this. People using their birthdays as excuse to receive presents was not uncommon, but the way this eighth squire Fu was using his martial arts to force people giving him present was unheard of.

Yu Peiyu also knew that the Hundred Paces Divine Fist was a Shaolin special technique, could this eighth squire Fu be a secular disciple of Shaolin?

Ouyang Long and Yu Xuan were both famous and strong martial artists in the realm, seeing that both of them feared this eighth squire Fu that meant that he was not to be trifled with.

However Yu Peiyu could not think of who this man was.

Ouyang Long stayed quiet for some time before saying: "I fully understand master Yu's predicament. However I too am

most worried and fear for my own life, I really do not have the ability to help you.”

Yu Xuan looked at the cargo on the carriage and said coldly: “So lord Ouyang has found a suitable present for eighth squire Fu?”

Ouyang Long said with a troubled smile: “I found a simple object which I tend to present to eighth squire Fu. I too hope it is sufficient.”

Yu Xuan laughed loudly: “Lord Ouyang must be joking.”

He suddenly stopped laughing and said: “Let us be honest! If your present is not suitable how would you even dare considering presenting it. Furthermore I think this object is most adequate too.”

Ouyang Long’s face changed and asked: “You know what it is?”

Yu Xuan said casually: “Well, I think I have a vague idea.”

Ouyang Long said sternly: “So you were spying on me the entire time!”

Yu Xuan said: “Lord Ouyang, on your way here you met with no trouble at all not even a small thief. Do you honestly believe because you have disguised yourself perfectly?”

He laughed arrogantly: “Let us not even mention thieves even laymen can see that you are not transporting herbs. Heavy herbs like this do not exist.”

Ouyang Long sneered: “Even if there were small thieves who would consider attacking me, I am still quite capable of dealing with those.”

Yu Xuan said: “I helped lord Ouyang chase away numerous of unwelcomed thugs, even if you’re not grateful you should at least show a bit of consideration for my hard work.”

He laughed: “I think lord Ouyang won’t object if I want some repayment for my efforts.”

Ouyang Long was stunned and knew what Yu Xuan wanted from him. He asked earnestly: "Master Yu wants this carriage."

Yu Xuan sighed: "I wish there was another option, but unfortunately there isn't."

Ouyang Long said: "Alright, I will give it to you."

He pushed the carriage forward and wanted to use to it bump into Yu Xuan.

Yu Xuan anticipated that and leapt up and in mid-air he drew his sword and stabbed towards Ouyang Long with incredible speed.

Yu Xuan is proclaimed to be the best swordsman of the Southern Sea regions, all his moves were conducted with lightning speed. Ouyang Long put his hand on his shoulder and ripped open his rain robe and used it curl it up and blocked that stance. This rain robe of his was made from the silk spun by golden silkworms, swords and sabre cannot punch a hole through it. It was his weapon in combat, it was not handy in assaults but excellent when used to defend oneself. The sword stabbed a few times on the robe causing sparks.

Ouyang Long twirled the robe again and swept it towards Yu Xuan and right behind the robe he flung ten odd metallic objects towards Yu Xuan's chest.

One of Ouyang Long's lethal stances, Golden Robe Followed By The Iron Swallow. Ever since Ouyang Long started to roam the realm few have been able to avoid this attack of his.

However suddenly Yu Xuan's body was not in front of him anymore and the sword of Yu Xuan's also made a twirl and before he could turn around the sword pierced through his back.

This was a famous technique from the Hainan School called The Flying Fish Move, Yu Xuan has mastered this technique

to perfection.

Ouyang Long was a famous martial artist on the waters, perhaps he should have stayed there. As the saying goes if the dragon leaves the sea, he might perish on the land.

Yu Peiyu was also surprised that Ouyang Long could not even handle three stances of Yu Xuan. He was wondering whether he should interfere but when he was still doubting Ouyang Long was already killed.

Yu Xuan pulled out his sword and said softly: "Lord Ouyang, I really did not want to kill you. But if I don't kill you I will surely meet death. You should not blame me, you should blame eighth squire Fu."

He started to push the carriage himself.

Suddenly a voice said: "You should really learn to share.....I take carriage you can have the corpse."

When the first word was uttered the person was about 40 metres away but when the final word was said, the speaker was standing in front of Yu Xuan.

While he advanced forward Yu Peiyu and Yu Xuan heard a soft bell sound. Yu Peiyu could not see this man clearly, but Yu Xuan backed away and it looked like he shrunk when he saw this man.

This man moved like a spirit and was very tall, but he had a lump on his back. When Yu Peiyu saw the fear Yu Xuan showed towards this man and the sound of the bells and the posture, he remembered something.

When the bells of the hunchback are sounded, you will perish right away.

Could this man be one of the ten great martial arts masters along with Yinghua Shi-Tai, divine dragon swordsman, granny Hu, master Nu, etc. the flying hunchback of the north Yi Kun?

Yu Xuan smiled apologetically: "I have heard of old master Yi's fame for many years, it is most fortunate that I can finally meet you."

Yi Kun ignored him and had his eyes on the carriage, Yu Xuan deliberately stood in front of the carriage hoping to block Yi Kun from seeing it.

Suddenly Yi Kun moved forward and passed Yu Xuan he removed the packages of herbs and was holding a metal box in his hand.

Yu Xuan's eyes were fuming with anger but he did not dare to advance forward to reclaim the box.

Yi Kun opened the box and took a look, he laughed: "Excellent, marvellous!"

Yu Xuan smiled apologetically: "Not good, not excellent. These are mere silly stone statues, even I cannot see anything special about them. Why would old master Yi like such rubbish?"

Yi Kun laughed: "In that case you won't mind me keeping them."

Yu Xuan now could not even smile apologetically, he stuttered: "These.....these are really not worth anything.....if....if old master Yi really likes them....I....I will instruct the best sculptor of Beijing to make another set....no better than this set for you.....completely made from....from jade."

Yi Kun said: "No need, I like these."

Yu Xuan wiped away his sweat and said: "But....but...."

Yi Kun looked at him and said sternly: "I hardly want anything in life, now that I do how dare you spoil my mood! Are you only afraid of old Fu's Hundred Paces Divine Fist, so you're not afraid of my Wind Chasing Palms?"

Yu Xuan was sweating like a pig now, he was looking at the sword in his hand, he was wondering whether he should

attack or not.

Yi Kun smiled coldly: "I heard that your swordsmanship is said to be very swift. There must be a reason why you are the leader of the Hainan School, you must know a few monkey tricks..... Come, show me what tricks you have learnt."

Yu Xuan gritted his teeth and said: "In that case forgive me for being rude."

He stabbed out with everything he had, during this point he could not hold back. In an instant his sword almost reached the throat of Yi Kun, Yi Kun seemed to be oblivious to the sword and did not pay any attention to it.

Yu Xuan was pleased and thought this old fool is too confident, in a flash Yi Kun raised his hand and used his index- and middle finger to hold the blade of the sword.

Yu Xuan was shocked and wanted to twirl the sword as to slice off the fingers of Yi Kun, however the sword could not move an inch. He used his full power hoping to pull out his sword again, but in vain. He could hear the laughter of Yi Kun, he used a bit more force and Yu Xuan was pushed back and Yi Kun was holding the sword now. He used a bit more energy and the sword broke into two. The sword was made from fine metal, it was amazing that he could break without much force.

Yi Kun laughed: "Old Fu's birthday is in two days, but it is my birthday tomorrow. I just learnt the same method as old Fu, forcing people to give me presents. If you refuse I will kill you, it is your choice."

Yu Xuan looked awfully pale and could not speak anymore.

Another voice suddenly laughed: "It is your birthday tomorrow, but today is my birthday. So shouldn't you give that present to me?"

A young man gracefully walked down from the slope, his robe was torn and dirty. But he did not look ordinary at all, it

was Yu Peiyu.

Yi Kun was shocked that he did notice that another person had arrived, furthermore it has been decades since someone had the nerves to retort him, he looked at the speaker and angrily said: "Give it to you? Who are you?"

Yu Peiyu smiled: "My name is Yu Peiyu, people call me the world's number one graceful swordsman."

Before he was finished Yi Kun laughed loudly: "The world's number one graceful swordsman?.....hahahahaha I have met many arrogant people in my life, but you are the most arrogant one I have ever seen."

Yu Xuan was surprised too and thought it was funny but he could not laugh now.

Yu Peiyu walked over to Yi Kun and now he noticed he was very tall, even with a hunchback he was taller than Yu Peiyu half a head. He was not really a Taoist priest, nonetheless he wore a Taoist robe. He was at least 60 years old and had a long beard. His laughter was loud and clear, everyone's ears felt a bit numb, not only had this man swift techniques his internal power was also incredible. No wonder that the famous leader of the Hainan School was unable to withstand a single stance from him.

However it seems that Yu Peiyu was not really impressed by him, he smiled gently: "I am just like you, when I do not receive my present I will get extremely angry too."

Yi Kun stopped laughing and carefully observed this young man like he was some strange creature. After some time he started to laugh again: "Angry? I would like to see you angry!"

Yu Peiyu said: "Very well."

With the tip of his foot he kicked up half the sword of Yu Xuan and caught with his hand and immediately launched an attack on Yi Kun.

Yu Xuan was most surprised that this young man was so bold as to attack one of the ten great martial arts masters, Yi Kun. That sword stance of his was gentle and elusive, without any force at all and also very slow.

As a matter of fact that stance is worthless and Yu Xuan was convinced that Yi Kun could blast that sword from his hand with one blow.

However when Yi Kun saw that attack he paced back with three steps and shouted strangely: "Good! I never expected that a young lad like you has some abilities!"

Yu Xuan was stunned, how could an attack like that be called [good]?

His attacks were not fast, but they followed each other fluently without openings. After ten odd of these attacks Yi Kun still did not counter-attack yet.

Yu Xuan was a famous swordsman too but after looking for some time he did not see the power of these slow techniques. He did not even see what stances he used.

Yi Kun kept praising Yu Peiyu: "Good lad! People like you could be called swordsmen with some difficulty, you are ten times better than those so-called worthless idiots who do not understand the essence of the sword. Yet they are called swordsmen and are leaders of orthodox schools, your nickname as the world's number one swordsman is not entirely too arrogant."

Although Yi Kun did not use a name but it was evident his sarcasm was directed towards Yu Xuan.

Yu Xuan was furious but did not dare to retort but could not leave it at that so he scoffed softly. He thought that Yi Kun could not see his scoffing, but Yi Kun could see everything and hear everything around him even in a fight ten times fiercer than this.

He suddenly floated towards him and said: "Why are you laughing? Do you think your swordsmanship is better than

this young man?"

Yu Xuan could not restrain himself anymore and said: "I really cannot see the power of his swordsmanship."

Yi Kun sneered: "If you can understand the excellence of his stances, his swordsmanship wouldn't be that good, right? For example like the great historical musician *Bo Ya, his unmatched play of the zither can only be admired by other true musicians. Simple riff-raff would not understand the beauty of it."

{*Bo Ya: A wonderful musician who lived in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) has been proclaimed to play the zither perfectly. Even attracting animals.....}

Yu Xuan was furious when he heard that, he even forgot that Yu Peiyu helped him out here. He aimed his fists towards Yu Peiyu's chest and struck out with two fist techniques.

Yu Peiyu did not foresee that this man was as stubborn as a mule and saw that his fists were very fierce, he casually twirled his sword to block those two fists.

That twirl looked very gentle and casual, but like *Wang Xizhi or *Huaisu even a simple stroke with the brush has reached the level of excellence and perfection.

{*Wang Xizhi: famous calligrapher, 303 A.D. - 361 A.D. His calligraphy is said be unmatched everyone even now still admires his characters. *Huaisu: A Buddhist monk who lived in the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618-907) renowned for his excellent calligraphy.}

Yu Xuan felt that his half sword became a circle of sword energy, impenetrable he himself was about to throw himself in that circle of sword energy. He had no choice but to break off his attack and retreat. He changed several movements and was finally able to escape from that sword energy, however a flash of energy did slightly pass him although he was not injured but his robe was torn.

Yi Kun laughed: "Now do you understand the excellence of his techniques?"

Yu Xuan looked very pale suddenly he turned red from embarrassment and bowed to Yu Peiyu, he said: "Your swordsmanship is far superior to mine, my respects."

Yi Kun said: "Well, you're not entirely worthless. You know when to acknowledge your faults when you are confronted with it."

Yu Xuan said: "I have heard of a young man with the same name as the late son of chancellor Yu Fanghe, in a short period of three months he has done several great deeds."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "News travels fast in Wulin."

Yu Xuan said: "It is said that young master Yu has good martial arts and is very gentle, humble. Furthermore he is very cautious....."

Yi Kun laughed: "Well, in my opinion everyone could be called gentle, humble but not this youngster here."

Yu Peiyu said: "Hmm?"

Yi Kun smiled: "Someone who calls himself [the world's number one graceful swordsman] cannot be called gentle and humble, can he?"

Yu Peiyu said: "You are very right."

Yi Kun said: "Your swordsmanship is very good, but you're still no match for me."

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, I won't lose in the initial 300 stances but I cannot win either."

Yi Kun said: "If you can't win, that means you will lose. After the initial 300 stances you will lose. Besides you seem to want to battle me, how can such a person be called cautious."

Yu Peiyu laughed a bit: "Everyone changes, the I you see before you is not the same Yu Peiyu of yesterday."

Yi Kun asked: "Now, why do you want to change?"

Yu Peiyu stayed quiet for some time before saying: "I want to become very famous now."

Yi Kun said: "People are afraid to become famous and pigs are afraid to become fat, haven't you heard of this saying before? If you're famous a lot of people will be looking for you, that way you won't live very long. There is nothing good about being famous."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I want people to look for me."

Yi Kun shook his head and said: "Listen to my advice, go home and peacefully spend your life in seclusion. I like you, young lad. I won't harm you today."

Yu Peiyu said: "If you give me that box, I will leave at once."

Yi Kun stared at him and asked: "Do you know what is in it?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I do not know."

Yi Kun asked: "Why do you want it?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "For no reason."

Yi Kun was stunned and asked with surprise: "If there is no reason, why do you want it?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Since all of you want it that much, why can't I have it?"

Yi Kun looked a bit angry and said slowly: "So you deliberately want to look for trouble here."

The two of them were fighting again.

Yu Xuan thought that Yu Peiyu was mad, he hoped both would perish at each other's hand in this fight that way he could reclaim the box again.

He decided to observe the fight and hope to gain the advantage in the end. However after some time Yu Peiyu's sword energy became weaker but the stances of Yi Kun became fiercer and fiercer.

Yi Kun still had the iron box under his arm-pit and it seemed that he did not fight Yu Peiyu with full potential.

Yu Xuan wondered why Yu Peiyu deliberately sought death.

It was obvious now that within moments Yi Kun could defeat Yu Peiyu, but suddenly Yu Peiyu moved forward and whispered something to Yi Kun. Yu Xuan could not hear what Yu Peiyu whispered, but Yi Kun turned pale and made a somersault backwards.

He was now standing seven metres away from Yu Peiyu and stared at him with fear, he was also trembling.

Why was Yi Kun so afraid now?

Yu Xuan was flabbergasted too.

After a long time Yi Kun stuttered:

“You.....you.....who.....who...are you? How...how do you....you know this?”

Yu Peiyu just calmly looked at him and did not reply.

Yi Kun was sweating heavily now.

Again after a long time, Yi Kun sighed deeply: “29 years.....29 years. In another 17 days it will be exactly 29 years. I never thought that people would still know about this after 29 years.....who would have guessed?”

Yu Peiyu said: “Have you forgotten about that?”

Yi Kun said sadly: “I wish I could forget about it, but I can never forget what happened.”

Yu Peiyu said: “Since you cannot forget about it, how can others?”

Yi Kun said: “But...but....how....not many people know about that incident.”

Yu Peiyu said: “If you do not wish people to find out about that, you should not have done that in the first place.....I know about it.”

Yi Kun asked with a shaky voice: "Are....are...you related to that incident?"

Yu Peiyu said casually: "Everyone with a conscience and a heart is related to that incident."

Yi Kun looked up into the sky and said softly: "I know I have to pay for that mistake sooner or later.....it has come back to haunt me now, after 29 years....."

He suddenly turned to Yu Peiyu and said fiercely: "I don't care who you are, but I just want you to know that Yi Kun is not a person who is afraid to pay for his mistakes."

Yu Peiyu said: "I do not want you to pay for that mistake, I just want you to repent for that incident."

Yi Kun laughed loudly: "If I did not repent for that mistake, I could have killed you now. So nobody might find out about that incident."

He put the iron box down on the ground, he sighed deeply before saying sadly: "One mistake you will live to regret if for a thousand years, looking back a hundred years are not enough.....a hundred years are not enough....."

He suddenly raised his palm and struck himself on the skull.

Yu Peiyu softly recited the final words of Yi Kun and suddenly he felt very sad and earnest.

A mistake made in an instant and it keeps haunting one for the rest of one's life. It is not fair and even wicked. If Yi Kun did not feel remorse he would not have committed suicide. Since he did feel remorse why can't we forgive him?

Yu Peiyu was saddened and said softly: "I was wrong.....I am wrong....."

Yu Xuan was complete dumbfounded by what happened, he now asked Yu Peiyu: "What did he do 29 years ago?"

Yu Peiyu looked at him and said sternly: "Shouldn't you be wondering what you have done?"

Yu Xuan said: "Me?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Just for a few stone figures you killed Ouyang Long."

Yu Xuan said: "If I don't kill him I will die. So I have no choice but to kill him, if he killed me I have no regrets either. The survival of the strongest that is the universal rule of the realm of martial arts, we as people of Wulin face death numerous times and from the very beginning you should know that you might get killed some day."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "Maybe you are right, we as people of the martial arts realm should not place so much emphasis on life. But if that is the case why are....are you afraid of eighth squire Fu?"

Yu Xuan's face turned red now, he said: "I am not afraid of death, but I am afraid of ghosts."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Is he a ghost?"

Yu Xuan sighed: "In my opinion he is even worse than a ghost."

He added sadly: "His family name is Fu, everyone says secretly he is [the rich bastard], but nobody of course dares to say that in his face. Once the golden sabre, Chen Xiong of Luoyang blurted out this nickname, when he stepped out of the main hall of the Fu estate he started to vomit blood....."

Yu Peiyu suddenly asked: "Does he have a wife, name eighth Madame Fu?"

Yu Xuan said: "Yes, it is said that eighth Madame Fu is an exemplary wife, gentle and caring. She is also a faithful Buddhist and hates to see killing, that is why eighth squire Fu kills people outside his residence."

Yu Peiyu looked pensive for a moment, suddenly he said softly: "Now, I....I remember now."

Yu Xuan asked: "What do you remember?"

Yu Peiyu smiled but did not answer his question, he said: "He is a very funny man, I would like to meet him."

Yu Xuan said: "My word! Funny?!? You say he is funny, my heaven! When you see him you won't find him funny anymore."

He now looked at the box and said sternly with a pale face: "There is only one present here, if you want to go...."

Yu Peiyu said: "You deliver your present, I do as I please."

Yu Xuan said: "But without a present how...how do you want to enter?"

Yu Peiyu said with a smile: "I don't need to bring a present, I will pretend to be your servant. It is not strange that a prestigious leader of a great orthodox schools is travelling with a servant."

The Elegant Assembly Estate, that was the home of eighth squire Fu. Many thrifty, greedy rich people like to consider themselves as elegant, refined. This Elegant Assembly Estate is not different from other manors from rich people, however how much space does one need after one is gone.

But the most strangest thing when you enter this estate is seeing servants, a lot servants in green robes. All seem to know martial arts but all of them walk like women.

A short and a tall servant approached Yu Xuan and Yu Peiyu, the short servant looked very white but had a few pimples on his face, he kept giving Yu Peiyu meaningful looks. It seems he was trying to flirt with Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu had received a lot of those meaningful looks but this was the first time a man gave him one.

He felt disgusted the way these two servants were staring at him, he wanted to poke out their eyes.

The tall servant put his hand on his waist and said in a feminine way to Yu Xuan: "Who are you? What are you doing here?"

If it was not for the moustache you would almost think he was a woman.

Yu Xuan coughed dryly: "I am Yu Xuan from Hainan, I came here to congratulate eighth squire Fu."

The tall servant used his hand to cover his mouth and laughed: "You're the great leader of the Hainan School, master Yu. Where is your present?"

Yu Xuan said: "The present has been prepared, would you mind announcing me?"

The tall servant looked at Yu Peiyu and said: "Who is this and what is he doing here?" His awful feminine voice really got on one's nerves, one would love to smack his teeth out of his mouth.

But the ever so hot-headed Yu Xuan respectfully said: "He is Yu Er, he is a servant of mine. Please take good care of him while he is here."

The tall servant giggled: "Yu Er.....He looks very handsome, does he have wife?"

The short servant suddenly took Yu Peiyu by the hand and giggled too: "Master Yu can join our lordship's feast, brother Yu Er can drink with us."

The hand of the short servant was greasy and wet, like someone put slime on the hand of Yu Peiyu and he could not wipe it away.

Yu Peiyu could almost throw up now.

Fortunately someone called from the main hall: "Our lordship says master Yu can enter, please come in with the present."

Yu Xuan said hurriedly: "Yes...yes....right away."

He started walking inside after two paces he said: "Yu Er, why are you standing there? Follow me inside!"

Yu Peiyu felt relieved and was grateful that Yu Xuan helped him to escape from those two admirers.

The short servant seemed not too willing to let go of Yu Peiyu and said: "Don't forget to look for me afterwards, I'm

called Little Clever.”

Yu Peiyu thought this little creep is called [Little Clever]??!??

Yu Peiyu wanted to kick him away from himself, he felt disgusted also quite amused by this. He said something back like I will see later on or so and quickly followed Yu Xuan in.

There were already eight, nine other guests sitting here, all of them looked quite impressive. They must be leaders of prominent martial arts experts, but they were looking worried now.

Sitting at the head were eighth squire Fu and his wife eighth Madame Fu. The infamous eighth squire Fu was a strange looking old man. His eyes were just ordinary eyes, his nose was at the right place, in fact he looked very normal but somehow he made people feel uncomfortable when they saw him.

The wife of his looked like an elderly rich lady, but she wore a lot of make-up too much in fact. But it was only natural, women who have reached a certain age love to cover the liver spots and wrinkles with make-up.

Yu Xuan who did not want to look like a coward in front of the other guest tried to keep his grandeur, however unsuccessful before he knew it himself he bowed and said: “This humble person is Yu Xuan of Hainan, I wish you a pleasant birthday and may you live another thousand years lordship.”

Eight squire Fu smiled a bit: “Yes, thank you for coming today even living so far away.”

Like the servants his voice sounded feminine too, making everyone uncomfortable again.

He opened the box and took it the marble figurines, he looked very happy now and admired those figures with beady eyes. He kept saying [nice, good, great craftsmanship].

He patted Yu Xuan on the shoulder and laughed: "Great! Thank you for this wonderful present, please take a seat here at the honorary seat. The efforts you have gone through to bring me this present, thank you very much."

Yu Xuan was thrilled in his heart the other nine martial arts experts looked a bit upset. But that was the rule here eighth squire Fu only lets the guest with best present sit at the honorary seat, it does not matter whether whether you are older or more famous but the present are most important.

Every guest was either the leader of the a prominent martial arts school, association or armed guard agency, so all the presents were invaluable.

One person presented 18 pearls as big as lychees the sizes of each pearl was identical to each other. The pearls would give light in dark places.

One presented a jade cup with nine dragons carved on it, during humid air the cup would emit clouds and fogs and when the weather turned better the clouds and fog would disappear. When plain water is poured in it, it will have the flavour of a fine wine.

Some of these treasure were so rare that the Imperial Palace might not have them, all the leaders were initially not to happy to give away their prized treasures but keeping their lives was even more important. Furthermore they wanted to show off their riches in front of the other martial arts experts, nobody understood why those stone figures got eighth squire Fu's attention.

By this time everyone felt hungry and wondered when the dinner was going to be served, they did not even had a cup of tea ever since they arrived.

Eighth squire Fu seems to have intention of letting his guest eat now, he looked like he had fallen asleep.

Fortunately eight Madame Fu was aware of the hunger of their guests, she called the servants and said: "It is not time

to eat yet, but all of our esteemed guests have come from afar they must be hungry. Go to the kitchen and let them eat some pasty first.”

Everyone was pleased when they heard that, suddenly they thought that eighth Madame Fu looked quite pretty and young for her age.

After awhile servants came out with big plates and when they put the plates in front of the guest, everyone was disappointed. The so-called pasty were buns with some salted vegetables in it, just plain big buns.

However everyone was hungry and the buns looked quite tasty when you are feeling hungry.

Eighth Madame Fu smiled with difficulty: “I am sorry, but please bear with us. I do not know when my husband will wake up but please help yourself to these buns.”

Most of these guests hardly even touched buns normally why should they even they can have feasts, but since dinner is postponed indefinitely some helped themselves to those buns.

Yu Peiyu was both angry and amused when he saw this, but he worried about eighth Madame Fu’s laughter. He was worried her make-up might drop off when she was laughing, fortunately she put layers and layers on it.

The salted vegetables made everyone extremely thirsty and those ate the buns started to drink water cup after cup. But because of water the dough rose in their stomachs and in an instant those who ate were full and stuffed.

Those who did not eat thought: I will eat later one when the good food is served, those idiots have stuffed themselves.

After a moment eighth squire Fu woke up and called repeatedly: “Quickly serve the food and drinks! We cannot keep the guests hungry.”

Some of the guests thought: Those who ate those buns are idiots, the banquet is being served now.

When the servants came out they brought big plates of delicious dishes fit for kings and emperors, the wine was also of a good vintage. In an instant the aroma of the food and wine filled the main hall, those who ate the buns regretted stuffing themselves.

Eighth squire Fu suddenly said: "Wine is bad for our health, when Di Yi created wine the Yellow Emperor said that wine could very well be the cause of the destruction of empires. Wine is truly poisonous I cannot let my esteemed guests drink from poison. Impossible....impossible."

He waved his hand and added: "Put the wine back and give my esteemed guests water flavoured with sugar, but don't put too much sugar because sugar is bad for the teeth."

Those who enjoyed wine were disappointed and angry that this old goat is this thrifty.

Eighth squire Fu poured himself a cup of wine and said softly: "I am old.....I have lived long enough, even if I die of this poison called wine I will not mind. Here let us drink! Thank you my good friends for coming to my birthday."

Chapter 38 : Fortuitous Occurrences

At this point he could not control himself anymore and blurted out: "Are you Mr. Dongguo?"

The name [Mr. Dongguo] is filled with a sense of mystery and Yu Peiyu was a bit shocked too when he said that name. The old man laughed: "In face we are old friends too, don't you recognize me anymore?"

Everyone was surprised and annoyed that the wine was being replaced by water with sugar. After seeing eighth squire Fu drinking a cup, he was looking radiant he added with a big smile: "Sugar water is better than wine.....Hahahahahaha let us eat!"

Some of the smarter people were waiting for that sentence for some time now and could not wait to pig out on the banquet.

Suddenly eighth squire Fu looked angry again and said earnestly: "Who prepared these dishes? Do you want to kill my guests?"

The smarter people were afraid again, some of them smiled apologetically: "What is wrong with these dishes?"

Eighth squire Fu said seriously: "These dishes contain too much fat, fat can harm the body.....That is why it is said that plain vegetables and tofu guarantee a long and healthy life. Especially practicers of martial arts should be more careful about our health, eating food with too much fat will only do harm. One can easily become fat and when one becomes fat his body won't be that flexible anymore, in battle an inflexible body is most dangerous. I will feel most sad if anything happens to my guests."

He had sound reasons, no one could say that his reasoning is flawed. Everyone was both angry and disappointed, eighth squire Fu made it seem like he had the well-beings of his guests as his first priority.

He himself sighed when he looked at the succulent dishes in front of him: "I am old already, I am not afraid of becoming fat."

He drank and ate heartily and said softly: "I don't mind suffering for my friends I will eat these dishes on your behalf. Please drink my friends."

Everyone stared at each other and cursed this old goat in their hearts and hoped he would choke on the food or stuff himself to death.

Now Yu Peiyu began to understand why people called him [the rich bastard], he met some thrifty and greedy men in his life but this eighth squire Fu really was too outrageous. How could such a person exist?

Suddenly a voice from the main hall said loudly: "As your good friend I will help you. Friends should share the problems and wealth, let me share your disaster."

This sentence was in the minds of all the guests and they were happy that finally someone had the nerves to say them.

All of them were worried and wondered how had the audacity to challenge eighth squire Fu.

Eighth squire Fu's face changed and put down his chopsticks, he laughed coldly: "I never had any good friends, all my friends are dead now. Who are you?"

That person laughed: "Little brother came from afar to congratulate eighth brother. Why would you say that I am dead."

When he first spoke he sounded like he was very near but nobody could see him, but now he sounded very far away.

In a moment a figure appeared at the door, a very tall figure and very skinny. He wore greenish long robe with a strange-looking sword in his girdle, he wore a big straw hat covering his face.

Eight squire Fu seems to have recognize the unwelcome guest also eighth Madame Fu seemed to look restless now. The strange man staggered in and laughed: "Won't you invite an old friend to a seat anymore?"

Eighth squire Fu's face was looking very dark now, but still said: "Yes, of course. Take a seat."

But he did not do anything additional to welcome this old friend.

The man in green robe said: "I understand only people who bring nice gifts are allowed to sit, those with no gifts or worthless presents will even get a spanking. Am I right?"

He searched his robe and sighed: "I think I forgot to bring a present, what shall I do? Of course, as the saying goes a poor scholar can present a piece of paper too. It is the thought that counts, isn't it?"

He took out a old piece of paper, gods knows what he used it for and put it in front of eighth squire Fu and laughed: "I wonder if this gift is suitable."

And the other guests looked surprised and upset including Yu Xuan, everyone who came here brought the most valuable treasure they could find. Even a coral of 2 metres was not good enough and the bringer was even killed of it, this fellow has the audacity to give eighth squire Fu a piece of old paper.

But strange enough eighth squire Fu said: "Enough....it is good enough."

The man in green robe said: "Since eighth brother says it is enough, I will share brother's discomfort too."

He suddenly moved to a guest with incredible speed and picked the man up by his neck and flung him out of the

main hall, this guests' nickname was "Half A Mountain" meaning he was quite fat. But the man in green robe picked him up with ease and chucked him out of there with no effort.

The man in green robe started to drink from the bowl of shark fin' soup and drank heartily from the expensive wine of eighth squire Fu.

Eighth squire Fu did not move or talk.

The man in green robe suddenly said: "I have never suffered this nicely for a long time, eighth brother let me share all your troubles in one go."

Eighth squire Fu suddenly looked pale and red, he loudly shouted: "You dare to call yourselves famous martial artists of Wulin, shouldn't you pay respects to the famous Mr. Tian."

Everyone was surprised that he was scolding them instead of the man in green robe, Yu Peiyu secretly smiled this way eighth squire Fu did not have to share his expensive food with the others. He really was too thrifty.

Yu Xuan looked at the sword of the man in green robe, suddenly he got up and walked over. He respectfully asked: "Sir, since your surname is Tian. Are you related to the famous divine dragon swordsman Mr. Tian, who subdued Mount Tian and roamed and won the respect throughout the entire realm."

The man in green robe did not answer he removed his big straw hat and revealed a long pale face. He looked very smart at first look but when you look carefully his face was covered with scars making him look mysterious and scary.

When Yu Xuan saw his face he backed away with three steps.

All the other guests got up too, Yu Xuan bowed and said: "It is indeed old master Tian."

The man in green robe laughed: "Yes, I am Tian Longzi."

When he laughed all his scars sort of moved making him look even more ugly and scary.

Yu Peiyu had heard of the name divine dragon swordsman Tian Longzi, he is said to be very elusive and his martial arts are very lethal. Yu Peiyu had fought his son, Tian Jiyun so he looked at Tian Longzi a bit longer.

Tian Longzi observed Yu Peiyu with his sharp eyes and smiled: "And who is this young friend?"

Yu Xuan quickly answered with a smile: "He is Yu Er, he is one of my pupils."

Tian Longzi scoffed: "You look very smart and I am surprised that the Hainan School can produce outstanding young men like you."

He looked at Yu Peiyu a bit longer, suddenly he turned to Yu Xuan and said: "It is said that the Eight Beauties of Wulin are in your possession, is that true?"

Yu Xuan lowered his head and secretly looked at eighth squire Fu: "Ehh....this.....euh....."

Tian Longzi clapped his hands and laughed: "I understand, no wonder old Fu asked you to sit at the honorary seat. You gave him the eight beauties of Wulin as present."

Everyone wondered are those little stone statues called the eight beauties of Wulin?

Tian Longzi smiled: "Eighth brother, are you still upset because I ate your food and drank your wine? Well, you won't be upset when I just want to look at those eight beauties of Wulin, will you?"

Eighth squire Fu did not look happy and did not speak.

Tian Longzi also looked unhappy and said seriously: "I just want to have a look, they won't be damaged by a mere look."

Eighth squire Fu looked pale and suddenly smacked the table, he loudly said: "Tian Longzi, don't think I am afraid of

you! My hundred paces divine fist is not inferior to your Advancing, Linking 18 Dragon Touring Moves.”

Tian Longzi said casually: “Also not superior to it either.”

Eighth squire Fu grunted.

Tian Longzi smiled: “I knew that eighth brother won’t fight a battle in which the outcome is unknown. Just let me take a look at those statues, that is all I want.”

Eighth squire Fu gritted his teeth, eighth Madame Fu smiled apologetically: “Brother Tian is always known for being honest. A look won’t do any harm to it? I think everyone here would like to have a look too.”

Everyone thought that eighth Madame Fu was a very mannered and considerate hostess.

Eighth squire Fu remained quiet for awhile before saying: “Very well, get my crystal bowl and fill it with clear water.”

Everyone wondered why water and a crystal bowl were needed to look at a few stone statues, everyone just had to stay patient and wait.

A beautiful large crystal bowl was brought out filled with water, eighth squire Fu put it on a table. Everyone in the hall knew that such a bowl was priceless and wondered what purpose it served.

Eighth squire Fu said: “In the last 30 years many experts were produced in Wulin, the amount of famous heroes is uncountable. However there are only eight women who are proclaimed to be matchless beauties in the last 30 years in Wulin, their ages and backgrounds are different from each other. Still their stories and beauty can captivate many men.”

In one of his hand he held the iron box and continued to say: “Master Yu presented me this, eight statues carved to likeness of these eight beauties.”

Everybody was disappointed when they heard this, even the statue of the world's most beautiful woman could not interest these people very much. A statue is still a statue, what is so wonderful about a lifeless figurine.

Eighth squire Fu said: "A statue is still a statue.....lifeless. But these are different, these are alive."

How can stone statues be alive?

Eighth squire Fu took out a statue and placed it on the table, he asked: "Do any of you recognize her?"

The statue was carved with utmost precision, even the eyelashes, eyebrows were carved on with perfection. It was almost that this beauty was alive. She wore the clothes of girls in Xinjiang giving her a different charm from Han Chinese beauties.

Tian Longzi smiled: "Is she the Miraculous Flower of Xinjiang Red Peony?"

Eighth squire Fu said coldly: "Brilliant observation, you really are well-informed."

Tian Longzi smiled: "Red Peony is the favourite concubine of the number one expert of the Tibetan Mi Zong Buddhism, lama Hongyun. She was not only beautiful but her mere smile could dazzle any man, many men tried to look for her only to have a look at her unmatched beauty. However Hongyun lama is a very jealous man and does not allow other men to look at his favourite concubine."

Eighth squire Fu said proudly: "But now we can watch to our heart's content, carefully observe."

He put the stone figurine into the water, when the statue was in water it became [alive]. Also her clothes slowly disappeared revealing a beautiful body and figure dancing gracefully in the water.

Eighth squire Fu could not help himself but to laugh: "Lama Hongyun has protected her like a treasure never letting anyone look at her, he will kill everyone who lays an eye on

her. We can look at her as we please and even play with her.....”

Almost everyone was dazzled by the appearance of Red Peony, some were even drooling. Only a few intelligent men were thinking that eighth squire Fu is a bit too strange.

Tian Longzi smiled: “Eighth brother, why don’t you look for a partner for Red Peony to dance with.”

Eighth squire Fu said: “That is a good idea.”

He looked into the iron box and said: “Red Peony is not that young anymore, I will look for a young lass whom she can dance with.”

He took another stone figure and put it in the bowl of water, he smiled: “Do you know who the most beautiful woman is in the southern regions of China? I will place the most beautiful woman of Xinjiang and Su province together, they will dance for us. Except for me who can arrange such a enchanting sight.”

When he finished, Yu Peiyu looked awfully pale. The statue chucked in the water was of Lin Daiyu.

Lin Daiyu was dancing in the water she was smiling and pouting, like she was telling Yu Peiyu with her facial expressions her tragic encounters.

Yu Peiyu could not control his temper anymore, he got up and kicked the table.

Everyone was angered and got up, they all thought that this young man has gone insane. This time it was Yu Xuan who turned pale.

Even eighth squire Fu was surprised and shocked, he never thought that this young man would have the nerves to be so bold in his presence. Only Tian Longzi was smiling, he looked at Yu Peiyu it seemed that he knew who Yu Peiyu really was.

After a moment eighth squire Fu composed himself, he was not angry he even laughed: "Since you do not wish to live anymore, let me fulfill that wish of yours."

He pushed away the table in front of him, he patted his robe that was wet of the splattered water and slowly walked to Yu Peiyu.

Everyone knew the power of the hundred paces divine fist and in his fit of anger he must use his full power, everybody made sure they stayed away from Yu Peiyu. They were afraid that they might be accidentally hurt too.

Yu Xuan felt a bit responsible for Yu Peiyu being here and did not want to abandon him, but he was very afraid of eighth squire Fu. He was still hesitating what to do when he was pulled aside by Tian Longzi.

All of the people Yu Peiyu was the most calm at this moment, but he was still very angry. When eighth squire Fu walked his way he did not greet, walked to him or back away from him.

He just said calmly: "You are not my match, let Madame Fu take your place in this battle."

Everyone was shocked again, the hundred paces divine fist of eighth squire Fu were known throughout the realm. But nobody knew that eighth Madame Fu was also a martial arts expert.

Eighth squire Fu looked scared now and exclaimed with shock: "What do you mean with that?"

Yu Peiyu said coldly: "You know perfectly well, what I mean. Do you want me to say it even more evidently?"

Eighth squire Fu now even looked more afraid and the ever high and mighty eighth squire Fu has fallen today.

His wife eighth Madame Fu stayed the same, but it seems that layers of her make-up were falling off her face.

Yu Peiyu smiled casually and picked a statue from the floor, he said: "Actually you don't need these statues, you are not interested in women. But you can't help it that other people gave them to you."

Eighth squire Fu backed away from Yu Peiyu with big paces and stuttered: "How....how.....do you....you know?"

Before Yu Peiyu could answer, eighth Madame Fu advanced forward with three steps and struck out her fist towards Yu Peiyu. The power released from that fist came crashing down on Yu Peiyu, nobody guessed that the refined nice old lady would know such fierce stances. Because eighth Madame Fu attacked first she soon gained the upperhand, Yu Peiyu could only defend and not counter-attack. He was forced back with several steps and had difficulty catching his breath now, suddenly a flash of bright light was directed towards eighth Madame Fu's chest.

She cried out and made a somersault backwards and stood six metres away from Yu Peiyu now, her robe was sliced open revealing her chest. Her hairy bosomless chest.

Tian Longzi held his sword in his hand and laughed loudly: "Just as I thought, eighth Madame Fu is a man....."

All the guests were stunned. Eighth squire Fu crawled into himself and covered his face, eighth Madame Fu used her hands to keep her robe closed preventing people seeing her chest. A most pitiful and hilarious sight.

Both of them had good martial arts, they still had good martial arts and could very well still attack Yu Peiyu and Tian Longzi. However their secret was revealed and were most embarrassed now, they were reluctant to fight anymore.

Furthermore this secret was well kept for decades, the only person who knew about this was dead for years. How come this young lad knows about it, this normal young man.....Could it be that more people knew about it? Fear struck them in their chests.

Now they were afraid, nobody else feared them anymore and most of them started laughing at them.

Tian Longzi laughed: “No wonder you have a bunch of feminine male servants, you like those disgusting creatures because you are two revolting creatures too. A man marrying a man, this is new.....Wonderful!”

Suddenly someone said: “If he likes to marry a man, that is his business, for all we care he marries a monkey. If he likes that who are we to say no. As long as he doesn’t want you to become his wife, you should not interfere with affairs of others.”

A man walked inside, he sounded very tired like he has not eaten for days. He looked very strange, his skin was hanging loosely from his face, he wore an expensive robe but it looked too big for him. Three people could fit in it.

Who was this strange man, how dare he retort Tian Longzi, not many people in the world had that ability or the nerves to do that.

He looked strange but not very impressive, everyone was of opinion that Tian Longzi could kill him with one slap.

Tian Long Zi was both angry and amused by this man, but he smiled: “I take it you too have a man as wife, judging from your appearances no woman would like to marry you.”

Everybody started laughing loudly.

This strange man had too much skin hanging over his body, he laughed three times very loud before saying: “Even so it is none of your business is it?”

His laughter was loud but he did not look amused at all even now he stayed emotionless, everyone wondered how he produced that laughter. They were starting to find this strange man eerie.

Tian Longzi coughed: “What will happen to women if men started to marry men, this matter I have to look into.”

That strange man said: "Are you certain?"

Tian Longzi said: "Indeed, I will look into this no matter what."

Suddenly everyone heard two loud slapping sounds, and Tian Longzi's cheeks were red and imprints could be seen on his cheeks. He also swayed to left and right quickly after each slap.

The strange man looked at Tian Longzi indifferently, Tian Longzi thought he was dreaming, fortunately his cheeks were not hurting too much.

But everyone looked at his cheeks with amazement, he unintentionally touched his cheeks and noticed they were feeling very hot. He started to lose feeling in his cheeks and called out.

The strange man laughed: "Still meddling in other people's affairs?"

Tian Longzi made a strange gargling sound.

The strange man patted eighth squire Fu on his shoulder and said: "Well, how are you going to repay me for helping you out?"

Eighth squire Fu stuttered: "Th.....thank.....yo...you, sir....."

He was already scared out of wits by the martial arts of this strange man, he felt his body was paralyzed when this man patted him on his shoulder.

The strange man said: "If you don't know how to repay, let me tell you."

He picked up the iron box and started to put the stone figurines in and said: "If you can give me this, I will be content."

Eighth Madame Fu scraped her courage and said: "May I ask what your name is, sir?"

The strange man asked: "Don't you recognize me?"

He shook his head and sighed: "If others did not recognize, nevermind. But you? I am most saddened by this, very sad...."

Suddenly he took out a bag from his very very big robe and out of that bag he took out a drumstick, he look peckish and smelt the drumstick. Suddenly he sighed again and put the drumstick away.

When eighth Madame Fu saw his strange behaviour, his face changed and stuttered with fear:

"Ti.....Ti.....Tia.....Tian....."

She repeated the character [Tian] over and over again but could not say the another word.

Yu Peiyu suddenly knew who this person was and exclaimed with surprise: "Sir, are you Tian Chixing?"

The strange man laughed loudly: "You're right! Very good that a young man like you knows who I am.....not bad....not bad at all."

Yu Peiyu also knew why he looked so strange now, he used to be extremely fat and that is why his clothes do not fit anymore. When a fatty becomes skinny too quick, he will look like this present Tian Chixing.

But how did the ever so fat Tian Chixing lose so much weight in only three months, it is not easy for fatties to become thin in the first place.

Eighth Madame Fu stuttered: "Sir, how....how come.....you.....are this.....healthy...looking all of a s....sudden?"

Tian Chixing sighed: "You do not know the state I was in, I cannot eat a thing nowadays. Every time I eat my stomach hurts terribly, so if a person hardly eats how can he not become skinny."

He sighed again: "My nickname should be changed into [the hungry constellation] now."

Tian Chixing is known for having “eaten his way to invincibility” why is he even afraid to eat a drumstick now? Everyone was curious but did not dare to ask.

Yu Peiyu suddenly asked: “Sir, how long were you pursued by the Parrot? Those days must have been awful.”

Tian Chixing stared at Yu Peiyu with amazement and said: “You know about that too?”

Yu Peiyu said: “I know a bit about that.”

Tian Chixing kept staring at him and said softly: “This youngster knows a lot.....he knows a lot.....”

Yu Peiyu smiled: “Everyone pursued by the Parrot will feel most terrible, you will have sleepless nights. You cannot even enjoy a decent meal anymore. After one or two months one is bound to look most sickly.”

Tian Chixing sighed: “You are absolutely right. In these past two months I wanted to die several times, fortunately he left me alone after two months. But after my stomach could not really take heavy eating anymore, so from being a big eater I can now hardly eat at all.”

He was practically crying at this point, if one cannot even find the interest to eat delicious food anymore. That must be most tragic.

Yu Peiyu looked at the box with the stone figures he was holding now and said coldly: “So sir is find a different interest now?”

Tian Chixing laughed: “Not entirely, I want these figures because I am looking for someone.”

Yu Peiyu asked: “Who are you looking for?”

Tian Chixing said: “No matter what she too is one of the eight beauties of Wulin, her statue is bound to be on of them here. Well, I am afraid to look at her true self but I am not afraid of a mere figurine.”

Yu Peiyu frowned but asked: “Who is she?”

Tian Chixing blinked with his eyes and made a gesture with his right hand.

When Yu Peiyu saw that gesture he looked pale and exclaimed with surprise: "That day did Yu.....chancellor Yu make the same gesture to you, sir?"

Tian Chixing was stunned too and said: "You know about that too? Very strange.....very strange."

Yu Peiyu said: "According to my knowledge that gesture refers to [Mr. Dongguo]."

Tian Chixing said: "Mr. Dongguo? Who told you that this gesture refers to Mr. Dongguo? Since when is Mr. Dongguo a matchless beauty."

Yu Peiyu's heart skipped a beat and said: "That gesture refers to.....?"

Tian Chixing looked very afraid now and said: "If you don't know, how should I know?....."

His sentence was interrupted suddenly there was a persimmon in his mouth, how did it get there? Nobody saw how it flew into his mouth.

A voice said: "Nowadays it is most difficult to find a good place to rest."

The voice came from the roof and when everyone looked up they saw a big cloth sack, the voice came from inside that sack. Was someone in that sack? How did a sack got up there? Why would anyone hide in a sack like that.

Yu Peiyu was most surprised, some of the guests called out loudly: "It is the sack of universal mystery.....The preceptor of the sack is here....."

Everyone fled out of the main hall except Yu Peiyu, Tian Chixing did not even spit out the persimmon out of his mouth he did not even take the iron box with him. He knew that one should run as fast as possible when the sack of universal mystery appears.

The entire main hall was deserted, Yu Peiyu was standing alone in this big main hall where a series of strange events happened.

He too was feeling a bit scared at the moment and was wondering whether he should leave too.

Suddenly a voice from the sack said: "Young lad, since you are still here. Why won't you help this old man out of the bag?"

Yu Peiyu was shocked and wondered what he had to do now.

The voice said: "Well, are you going to let me suffocate in this bag?"

Yu Peiyu was looking pensive and replied: "Since you got into that bag yourself, why can't you come out by yourself?"

The voice stopped talking and started to make squirming sounds like he was really suffocating in there after some time the squirming sounds stopped too.

Yu Peiyu stamped his feet and leapt up, however when he reached that beam the sack fell down. Yu Peiyu leapt down again and opened the bag, but there was no one in the sack.

That is impossible because Yu Peiyu heard a voice coming from inside the sack himself. Yu Peiyu could not believe his eyes he heard a voice of an old man coming from the sack himself, he could not have just disappeared like that.

Suddenly he heard a voice from that beam again and saw his pair of feet and white long beard. The feet were small but the beard was very long.

Yu Peiyu took a deep breath, other people would think they encountered an immortal or a demon. But Yu Peiyu knew that the old man got out of the sack when he leapt up and took advantage when Yu Peiyu looked at the sack falling down. But the martial arts of this old man were truly awesome, he could even trick someone like Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu still remained very calm and smiled faintly: "Well, since old sir has such pleasure in playing hide-and-seek I won't disturb you anymore."

The old man asked: "Do you want to leave too? Look at this first!"

Before Yu Peiyu had the chance to respond something dropped down, Yu Peiyu was afraid to catch it with his hands and used the sack to catch it.

Under the lights of the lamp it was a stone figurine, when Yu Peiyu looked on the floor he noticed that the iron box with the eight beauties of Wulin were gone.

The old man must have taken the box when Yu Peiyu was busy opening the sack, but that was also in an instant the old man was really too fast for words.

Yu Peiyu was really getting scared now.

The old man laughed: "Young lad, take a good look at the beauty in your hands. It would be a waste to pass out on such a wonderful opportunity."

Yu Peiyu held the figure in the light and the figure seemed to come alive, she wore a black long dress. She was most beautiful but she also had an air of indifference and coldness, making her stand very far apart from one.

The old man asked: "Do you recognize her?"

Yu Peiyu said: "No, I do not."

The old man sighed: "You were born too late, that is why you don't recognize her. About 30, 40 years ago almost all men in the realm were willing to die for Madame Dark Jade."

Yu Peiyu said calmly: "I find her a bit too cold."

The old man laughed: "Because she was acting very cool a lot of people wanted to get to know her better. Nine of the ten men are fools, don't you know that?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Even the most beautiful woman has to die some day, what does this Madame Dark Jade have to do with

me?”

The old man said: “If you don’t know her, I would not let you see that stone statue of hers.”

Yu Peiyu looked surprised and confused.

The old man said: “That gesture you made to Tian Chixing refers to her.”

Yu Peiyu’s heart started to beat faster and faster, but he remained calm and said: “Still I do not know her.”

The old man said: “Think carefully, have you really not seen her before? To my knowledge you should at least have met her once.”

Yu Peiyu’s heart skipped a beat and remembered Hai Dongqing’s teacher. She was a true beauty too but she had her face veiled.

He also remembered a carving of a sack on the bamboo plaque.

At this point he could not control himself anymore and blurted out: “Are you Mr. Dongguo?”

The name [Mr. Dongguo] is filled with a sense of mystery and Yu Peiyu was a bit shocked too when he said that name.

The old man laughed: “In face we are old friends too, don’t you recognize me anymore?”

The old man gracefully descended from the beam, slowly like a leaf floating down and his beard was swaying with the wind.

When he landed Yu Peiyu saw that he was a skinny, short old man with a very long white beard. He looked very familiar to Yu Peiyu and suddenly he called out with surprise: “It’s you!”

Yu Peiyu met this old man before.

The first was when everything started his father was killed and he was forced out of his home by those imposters, at that moment he did not know how to live on. Then he met a

strange old man wanting to commit suicide, Yu Peiyu saved the old man and also refound his courage to live on too.

The second time was when he lost confidence in his own martial arts and then he met the old man again. Because he was pondering heavily he did not recognize the old man. The old man had a painting in his hand of a mountain that did not look like a mountain but captured the essence of the mountain. He remembered the words of the old man clearly: [It is a mountain but I drew it so it wouldn't look like a mountain. But if you look carefully it is a mountain. Although I didn't give it the form of the mountain, I managed to put the essence of the mountain in my painting. Other people may not see it, but I can. If I painted the mountain it will appear like a mountain to me. In my eyes and in my heart I know I painted a mountain. The beautiful part is I understand it but other people do not.]

Because of these words Yu Peiyu was able to place himself in the ranks of a true martial arts expert of the realm.

The theory of XiantianWujiSchool is based on the emphasis of essence over form, if one is able to leave the form and is able to enter the world of no boundaries no extremes.

Simplicity over complexity Yu Peiyu has reached the advanced level of the martial arts of his own school, although Yu Peiyu has not yet reached the level of perfection yet of no extremes and boundaries but he is close.

Yu Peiyu felt that this old man has no ill intentions towards him, in fact every time he needed help he was there to aid him. If he was supposed the evil mastermind of everything, it would be impossible. But the words of Madame Dark Jade sounded so convincing.

Yu Peiyu looked up and saw Mr. Dongguo looking at him, he smiled: "Have you recognized me?"

Yu Peiyu said respectfully: "I always remember your wise teachings, old sir."

Mr. Dongguo pointed at the statue of Madame Dark Jade and said: "Have you seen her?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, I have."

Mr. Dongguo said softly: "It is strange that she left you alive."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Why does she want to kill me?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Because you are the only one who can expose her secrets."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What secrets?"

Mr. Dongguo asked: "Do you know what her name is?"

He did not give Yu Peiyu the chance to ask and immediately answered the question: "It is not strange that you don't know her actual name, not many people know her real name. It is a big secret."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Why?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Her name is Ji Beiqing."

Yu Peiyu said: "Ji Beiqing? Is she related to Ji Kuqing?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Yes, they are.....she is his younger sister and wife."

Yu Peiyu was flabbergasted.

Mr. Dongguo sighed: "Unfortunate.....most unfortunate....."

He added with a wry smile: "All the members of Ji family are strange, they all are very pretentious and believe that they are better than everyone else. Nobody is fit to marry into their family."

Yu Peiyu said with a scary tone: "So.....their entire....family is.....created through inbreeding?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Indeed, for generations brothers and sisters are.....married to each other and because of this incestual relationships most of their descendants are mentally retarded or mad or even both. Ji Beiqing may look beautiful but she too is mad."

Yu Peiyu broke out in a cold sweat now.

Mr. Dongguo said: "She is a very proud madwoman and when she saw what kind of son she brought into this world she left everything behind in disappointment. That is why Ji Zanghua has no brothers or sisters so he was forced to marry an outsider, however he has never spent the bed with his wife."

That is why Ji Lingfeng did not acknowledge Ji Zanghua as her father and he also understood the pain of Madame Ji now.

So his original theory was correct Ji Lingyan and Ji Lingfeng were father by someone else, probably someone of his own family. Probably his [second uncle].

But he also wondered why Ji Beiqing would kill her brother and husband Ji Kuqing, that is something he saw with his own eyes.

Mr. Dongguo said: "From then onwards Ji Kuqing went even more insane and the same time Wulin was startled by a series of murders and thefts. Large quantities of treasures were stolen, numerous famous martial artists were killed, but nobody would have guessed that Ji Kuqing was behind these crimes."

Yu Peiyu heard of this story before, at Murder Manor old man Gao told him of this story this also meant that Mr. Dongguo was telling the truth.

Mr. Dongguo said: "More than ten odd top martial arts experts were investigating this matter, but only one deducted the culprit was Ji Kuqing but nobody believed him."

Yu Peiyu quickly asked: "Sir, do you know him?"

Mr. Dongguo smiled: "Of course I know him, he is my own younger brother, the thousand mile eagle Dongguo Gao."

Yu Peiyu always knew that old man Gao must have an impressive background, but he never guessed that he would

be the brother of Mr. Dongguo.

Mr. Dongguo looked at Yu Peiyu and smiled: "I know you must know him too."

Yu Peiyu sighed: "I owe old master Dongguo a lot, he saved my life several times."

Mr. Dongguo said: "My brother has reached the level of perfection in the art of levitation, he is honest, fair and righteous. Furthermore his medical skills are unsurpassed in the realm, even Hua Tuo* might not be much better than my brother."

{*Hua Tuo: a famous physician during the Three Kingdoms Period (220 - 280 AD).}

Yu Peiyu unintentionally touched his face and respect welled up in his heart.

Mr. Dongguo said: "Ji Kuqing was unable to withstand my brother's actions against him, so he feigned his death and fled to the western borders to meet up with his wife, sister Madame Dark Jade, Ji Beiqing."

Yu Peiyu asked with surprise: "Ji Beiqing was in the western borders?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Yes, the two met up with each other there. They had still intentions of realing the realm of martial arts and were preparing themselves to enter China again. However they feared my brother and I a lot and used another famous martial artist as a puppet."

Yu Peiyu looked very pale and stuttered: "Sir, you.....mean.....that Yu.....that Yu person....."

Mr. Dongguo looked sympathetic now and he said gently: "Your father, Mr. Yu was a true gentleman he would not assist them in these awful crimes. They knew that too and used a vicious ploy to kill your father and they found someone to impersonate him and manipulate the reputation of the late Mr. Yu."

Yu Peiyu was now both angry and very emotional, he remembered the day his father died tragically. He was also most grateful because finally someone knew that his father was not a hypocrite and was innocent.

Mr. Dongguo patted him on his shoulder and said gently: "The net of Heaven has large meshes, but it lets nothing through. Although you have suffered a lot these months and you have been ridiculed and mocked. But soon you will be able to clear your father's name and make a difference in the realm."

Yu Peiyu felt very warm and tears were welling up in his eyes, he kowtowed to Mr. Dongguo and said respectfully: "Sir, were you aware about my real identity all this time?"

Mr. Dongguo helped him up and said: "Of course I know, from the very first day misfortune fell upon you I saw you and urged you to keep on living."

Yu Peiyu took a few deep breaths to calm himself again, he said sadly: "There is still something I do not understand."

Mr. Dongguo asked: "What is it?"

Yu Peiyu gritted his teeth and asked: "Who is that fiend who is impersonating my father? How does he know the skills of the XiantianWujiSchool? He is capable of imitating my father to the spitting image."

Mr. Dongguo stayed silent for awhile, he sighed deeply: "A dragon has nine sons, each son different from the other. Your father Mr. Yu Fanghe is a remarkable, friendly gentleman. But his younger brother, Yu Duhe is thieving, murdering thug."

Yu Peiyu remembered reading something about that in the Yama book of debts and his limbs turned cold, he said with a trembling voice: "That fiend.....that fiend....is my very own.....uncle?!?"

Mr. Dongguo said sadly: "I should not pass judgement of family affairs of others but you must know that your uncle

was disowned by his own family. Your father did nothing bad to him in fact he did everything possible that could lead his brother to the right way, however in vain.”

Yu Peiyu looked very sad and could only nod now.

Mr. Dongguo said: “When Yu Duhe left your father, he turned even worse he was truly running amok in the realm. He killed and stole as he pleased and made many enemies, because of his superior martial arts and intelligence he was able to escape from his enemies several times. Everyone wanted to slice up his body, he was really hated that much.”

He continued: “One day he was at a famous brothel in Luoyang city, he was drinking heavily with the famous courtesan [Grand Qiao] till he got drunk. Little did he know that Grand Qiao was working for his enemies. That is almost 18 years ago around the second month.”

Yu Peiyu repeated softly: “18 years ago.....second month.....”

He remembered that in Murder Manor that a certain Yu person came there 18 years ago around the second month of that year.

Mr. Dongguo said: “That Yu Duhe was an exceptional fighter, even in his drunk state he could fight a way out of an encirclement of more than ten martial arts experts, he fled to Murder Manor.”

He continued with a sigh: “Yu Duhe knew that someone would protect him there in Murder Manor and he knew his way in the manor.....”

Yu Peiyu asked: “Was it not his first time there?”

Mr. Dongguo said: “He had an affair with Madame Ji for a long time, Ji Lingyan and Ji Lingfeng are his daughters.”

Yu Peiyu was still stunned, although he guessed that already but now his suspicions were confirmed. So the piece of jade was really a family heirloom of the family Yu.

And the embroidered characters on that pouch: Always at your side, never leaving never stop hoping.

The lover of Madame Ji was his uncle. That is why Ji Lingfeng and Ji Lingyan treated him differently because blood is really thicker than water, they are cousins.

Mr. Dongguo said: "Madame Ji hid Yu Duhe in the secret passage and thought he would be save there. However at that time Ji Kuqing pretended to be dead there too and saw Yu Duhe."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Why.....did.....?"

Mr. Dongguo understood what he wanted to ask and sighed: "Ji Kuqing wanted to silence Yu Duhe, but suddenly he realised that he could use this man also he saw a lot of resemblance in him. So he took Yu Duhe with him."

Yu Peiyu knew this too, because if not why would Yu Duhe leave behind that piece of jade.

Mr. Dongguo said: "Ji Kuqing made a clever choice because Yu Duhe was the younger brother of the late Mr. Yu Fanghe he now everything of his brother. Furthermore he had no difficulty in learning the habits of his brother, because they are brother they resembled each other a lot in appearances and height."

He sighed deeply: "It is not sheer coincidence, everything was thought of with utmost precision. If they did not have Yu Duhe, their target would not have been Mr. Yu."

Yu Peiyu looked pensive before asking: "Is Ji Kuqing well-versed in surgical skills?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Not him, but Madame Dark Jade has that ability. I have heard that she learnt those surgical skills and the art of disguise from Persia. It is different from my brother's but the outcome is very similar."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Sir, do you know that she has two pupils?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Do you mean Hai Dongqing and Yang Zijiang?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, indeed."

Mr. Dongguo said: "These two young men are not too bad, unfortunately they are being used by them. To my knowledge they are not aware of the secrets of their teacher."

Yu Peiyu said softly: "Of course! Even an outsider like me believed her words.....How can her own students not believe her? But who sent the shades?"

Mr. Dongguo answered: "Ji Beiqing of course."

Yu Peiyu asked with surprise: "Why would she send her own subjects to kill her own disciples?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Perhaps Yang Zijiang and Hai Dongqing were starting to know too much about her, if you're a disciple of such a person knowing too much is really dangerous. Furthermore she might think that she has almost won and has no more need for Hai Dongqing and Yang Zijiang."

He continued with a serious tone: "No matter what, Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing are really madmen. Their actions cannot be explained with logic."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Except for the shade I encountered, are there other four shades?"

Mr. Dongguo laughed: "Those are mere futile words of her to scare people, telling a few lackeys to impersonate ghosts is quite easy."

Yu Peiyu was pensive again and softly said to himself: "So Hai Dongqing and Yang Zijiang were also deceived by their teacher."

So when he told us to hide in the tunnel, he had no ill intentions. And Hai Dongqing truly believed the lies his

teacher told him, so he was being honest to me in that secret passage.....”

He broke out in a cold sweat, because Hai Dongqing was taking Zhu Lei’Er and Iron Blossom to the home of Ji Beiqing. He did not even know how to save them, he did not even know where she lived. Furthermore was Mr. Dongguo telling the truth?

Mr. Dongguo said: “I discovered these secrets too by digging for many years, but most of it is just my deduction. There is no proof and no one will believe it like that..... Who will believe me when I say that the Yu Fanghe of now is just Yu Duhe pretending to be his brother.”

Yu Peiyu sighed: “Sir, even I am not totally convinced by your story. How can others?”

Mr. Dongguo carefully observed him and said calmly: “I know you still have some questions and doubts now, but I will take you to see someone.”

Yu Peiyu asked: “Who?”

Mr. Dongguo smiled: “You will know when you see him.”

So Mr. Dongguo lead Yu Peiyu to his place to meet this mysterious person.

They walked off the main road and took a small path, they passed a brook and came to idyllic place with a cottage there. Yu Peiyu could smell the scent of herbal medicine.

Was someone ill in the cottage? And who was preparing the medicine?

The medicine was still cooking on the furnace outside, but no one was to be seen.

Why did Mr. Dongguo lead Yu Peiyu here?

A small cat jumped towards Mr. Dongguo, he smiled and caught the cat: “Little Black, Clever little back. Don’t pull out my beard.”

Yu Peiyu was not interested in meeting the pets of Mr. Dongguo and wondered why he was here.

Suddenly he heard a voice from behind him: "It is has been a long time, young master Yu. How are you doing?"

Yu Peiyu turned around and saw a familiar face, an old face with a pair of clear, sharp eyes.

Yu Peiyu was both surprised and happy, he called out with happiness: "Old sir, you're here."

It was old man Gao, it seemed like an eternity ago when he last saw him.

Old man Gao, Dongguo Gao was holding a bucket of water and silently walked up to the back of Yu Peiyu. Suddenly he saw the scar on Yu Peiyu's face and observed a bit carefully, he smiled: "It seems that the Jade Emperor does not allow us mortals to be perfect. Being flawless is perhaps not good at all."

Yu Peiyu seemed to be stunned and did not know what to say anymore.

Dongguo Gao patted him on the shoulder and laughed: "I know what you want to say, no need. There is someone in there who is very concerned about you and keeps wondering whether you are alright. Go in quickly."

Who could it be in the cottage?

And who is ill?

Is it Ji Lingyan?

Is it Xie Tianbi?

Or even Lin Daiyu?

Yu Peiyu's hands trembled when he opened the door.

He saw a man in a white robe lying in bed, he looked very distinguished but sickly. His eyes brightened up when he saw Yu Peiyu.

When Yu Peiyu saw him he was going mad with happiness and shouted: "Brother Feng San! You are here!"

After seeing old man Gao/Dongguo Gao and Feng San, Yu Peiyu believed Mr. Dongguo but there were still some questions in his heart that he could not explain.

He saw Madame Dark Jade, Ji Beiqing kill Ji Kuqing with his own eyes.

But he quickly narrated what happened to him and Zhu Lei'Er for the past few months to Feng San, Yu Peiyu felt sad and ashamed.

Feng San consoled: "Ji Beiqing won't harm Lei'Er, she just wanted to keep her as a hostage so you will listen to her commands."

Yu Peiyu lowered his head and said: "I should have thought about this earlier, why did I allow her to be taken away by her."

Feng San smiled: "Don't worry too much about Lei'Er, she is a clever and naughty girl. She could very well outsmart Ji Beiqing."

Yu Peiyu felt somewhat assured, he now took out the black notebook and bamboo plaque and said: "I found this at the house in Family Li Village....."

Feng San frowned and said: "Why would Lady Zhu treasure this so much?"

Chapter 39 : The Beginning Of Chaos

Mr. Dongguo was stunned and asked: "What are you suggesting here?"

Dongguo Gao said: "On our way here, we heard that the contents of the book of debts were already exposed. Is that true?"

Mr. Dongguo laughed proudly: "Since the brat was sleeping I took the liberty of exposing it for him."

Feng San sighed: "Goodness me! You old fool, what have you done?"

Mr. Dongguo was confused and asked: "What do you mean?"

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "This notebook contains all the secrets of every martial artist in the realm, with this in her possession Lady Zhu held control over almost everyone in Wulin. Nobody would dare to confront her actions, because they were afraid she would use their secrets against them."

Feng San nodded but then he shook his head again and said: "That is true, but there is also one very big disadvantage. This Yama debt book can also lead to great disaster to the holder."

Yu Peiyu immediately understood what Feng San meant and said: "I understand what you mean, third brother. Those who have their secrets noted in here want to have this book. On the one hand they can hide their own secrets, on the other hand they could control the other people in this book."

Feng San nodded and said: "Indeed, since you already took a look into this book. I suggest you burn it, before trouble comes your way."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "I was thinking that I could use it the other way. If people knew I have the Yama Debt book, they won't believe I have burnt it."

Feng San was confused and asked: "Why?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Nobody will believe that I would have burnt this book. Trouble will come no matter what, but I want to start the turmoil a bit sooner than someone is anticipating."

Mr. Dongguo was listening and stroking his long white beard, but when he heard Yu Peiyu's words he quickly interrupted: "Young man, if I hear correctly you want to create chaos in the realm."

Yu Peiyu nodded his head and explained: "Right, I want to expose the contents of this book tomorrow. I have two motives for doing this. Firstly I can avenge my late father, secondly I can restore balance in the realm. By this all the secrets will be revealed, not allowing some hypocrites to continue deceiving and lying."

All three men looked at Yu Peiyu with amazement but also with respect.

Mr. Dongguo was still stroking his beard and kept nodding. Suddenly he said earnestly: "Young man, I admire your spirit and your plan to benefit the realm. However if you casually expose the contents like this, I would say....."

Yu Peiyu asked: "Sir, what do you want to say?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "I would say you have a death wish."

Yu Peiyu said: "Sir, I understand what you mean. With my present martial arts I cannot face the upcoming chaos."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Very smart. You're right."

Feng San said earnestly: "Fourth brother, you have to think carefully. I too respect your spirit but do you have the ability to back it up."

Yu Peiyu laughed: "Third brother, I have already thought this over carefully before making this decision."

Again everyone stared at him.

Feng San asked: "What else do you have to protect yourself? Please don't keep us in suspense."

Yu Peiyu held out the bamboo tablet and said: "With this plaque I don't have to fear anyone."

Mr. Dongguo was startled and said with amazement: "Young man, are you mad? Do you want to shift the blame of this upcoming chaos into my shoes?"

Yu Peiyu said seriously: "No, sir. That is not my intention. I would to use this plaque to ask you to teach me the ephemeral form dexterity."

Mr. Dongguo was shocked and asked: "How do you know that I have learnt the ephemeral form dexterity?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Madame Dark Jade, Ji Beiqing told me. She also said that only the ephemeral form dexterity could overcome her pre-heaven seraphic energy."

Mr. Dongguo angrily said: "So I am your target now? Are you threatening me with that plaque?"

Yu Peiyu respectfully held the plaque in front of him and said: "Sir, don't be angry. I am not threatening you at all. I was just hoping that you would assist me in restoring peace in the realm."

Mr. Dongguo grunted and took the plaque back, also he struck out his palm towards the chest of Yu Peiyu.

Feng San and Dongguo Gao shouted with fear.

But it was too late, when they noticed that Mr. Dongguo was using the ephemeral form dexterity they heard Yu Peiyu cry out in pain. His body was flung outside the house and landed near the brook.

Feng San was shocked and sad, he angrily shouted: "Old Dongguo, have you gone mad? Why did you kill him!"

Mr. Dongguo smiled: "You worry too much."

He swiftly left the house and when Feng San rushed out too he and Yu Peiyu's body were gone. He could only see a grey figure moving with incredible speed in the horizon, but in a flash the figure was gone too.

Feng San was dying with anxiety, suddenly he heard a voice coming from behind him: "Don't worry now! We cannot catch up with him now. But I know where he is hiding, when you are better we will look for him together."

Feng San turned around and said anxiously: "When....when I am better? But...but my fourth brother...."

Dongguo Gao said: "You really worry too much. Yu Peiyu isn't dead, he won't die."

Feng San looked at him with his confused eyes.....

The sun came through again, lighting up the ground with her radiance. Also the clouded look of Feng San was gone now, he understood what just happened.

Meanwhile there was a place where the sun and her radiance could never reach, the secret tunnel of Ji Kuqing. Three people were still walking there endlessly to the exit. After resting for a few days in the horrible quarters of Ji Kuqing, they had now regained much energy and left earlier to leave this horrible tunnel behind.

They were Zhu Lei'Er, Hai Dongqing and Iron Blossom.

They did not speak but just held each other's hands and moved forward by touching the wall, Zhu Lei'Er held on to Iron Blossom, Iron Blossom held on to Hai Dongqing. They were not in a talkative mood, in fact each and every one of them were feeling gloomy.

If Madame Dark Jade did not appear they would have been turned into wax statues earlier, they would still shiver if they thought back about that. They were now going the same way back, but different now. The group was not complete anymore, Yu Peiyu was not here with them. Especially Zhu Lei'Er felt down and gloomy, without Yu Peiyu around her she felt that this dark tunnel was even darker.

They still had a long way before reaching "the 39 lamps."

Hai Dongqing could not stand the silence anymore and said loudly: "Somebody once said:[Not talking is worst than

dying.] But now the sayer of this wonderful sentence is awfully quiet. Don't you think this is strange?"

Zhu Lei'Er stopped walking and said: "Are you referring to me?"

Hai Dongqing said: "If the shoe fits, I would rather argue all the way back than walking back in this gloomy silence."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "I am not in a good mood, so spare me your sarcasm."

Hai Dongqing was stunned and said: "Not in a good mood?"

Zhu Lei' Er was also bit confused by his stunned expression.

Iron Blossom interrupted: "It is obvious. Miss Zhu is missing Yu Peiyu, with him gone she is also missing her spirit. Men cannot understand this."

Zhu Lei'Er blushed, fortunately nobody could see her in the dark.

Hai Dongqing retorted: "Well, there is no reason to be upset about that. They will only be separated shortly, furthermore my teacher wants to accept Miss Zhu as her disciple. That will be most wonderful and most people will be very envious of such an opportunity."

Iron Blossom said: "Those are your thoughts, do you know if those are the wishes of Miss Zhu?"

Hai Dongqing was stunned and kept quiet, he thought he might keep quiet now. The three of them continue to move forward without any sound, they hoped they could quickly leave this hell behind them.

Suddenly Zhu Lei'Er stopped and whispered: "Do you hear that? What is that sound?"

There were all kinds of eerie soft noises in this tunnel, but this sound was different and had rhythm. It sounded like something, someone was floating or walking very fast. Because of the echo they could not hear clearly, but one

thing was clear another person appeared and was coming their way with incredible speed.

Zhu Lei'Er reacted very fast and pulled Hai Dongqing and Iron Blossom to the wall and all three stayed quiet and waited.

At this point a gush of wind moved by them and they could vaguely see a dark figure moving by them, the figure moved very fast and was gone in an instant.

They could not see who that figure was, it looked like a raven or a bat.

After some time Zhu Lei'Er whispered:
"Strange....strange....."

Iron Blossom gently pushed her and said: "Why do you say [strange] a few times? Did you notice something odd?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Just.....that shadow reminded me of Yu Fanghe, the chancellor of Wulin. I cannot explain it, it is just a feeling."

Iron Blossom said: "What would he want here?"

Zhu Lei'Er said: "Well, the only way to find out is to go back and eavesdrop."

Iron Blossom said immediately: "I have no interest in that. I am not going back to that hideous place."

Hai Dongqing said: "I support the idea of Miss Zhu, furthermore all those wax henchmen were killed by my teacher. There won't be a dangerous situation like earlier, rest assured."

Zhu Lei'Er added adamantly: "If that really is Yu Fanghe, it might be linked to Yu Peiyu. I really have to go back and investigate."

Iron Blossom had no choice and gave in to Hai Dongqing and Zhu Lei'Er.

The stone hall was dark, there was only one lamp burning. A woman in black was sitting in a chair, she was Ji Beiqing also

known as Madame Dark Jade.

It was silent in the hall, she was looking pensive too like she had a lot on her mind. She is a very proud woman but after hearing Ji Kuqing's words she too felt that her plan to deal with Yu Peiyu was a bit too bold. However being a proud woman she rather continue to make a mistake than admitting her fault.

The stone hall was a cold place, but the expression on her face was even colder.

After some time she softly said to herself: "Am I wrong?.....Have I really made a mistake?....."

She was of the impression that nobody was here and nobody would hear her confession. But she was wrong.

Suddenly a voice said: "Yes, you're wrong. You made a grave mistake."

Ji Beiqing woke up from her pensive mood and yelled: "Who is it?"

The voice said: "You didn't even recognize my voice. That shows that you are really frustrated now."

A figure appeared it was Ji Kuqing.

Ji Beiqing stared at him and said coldly: "You are quick?"

Ji Kuqing said: "You should ask this question to someone else. You really should ask that brat why he made such a hasty decision."

Ji Beiqing said with surprise: "Do you mean Yu Peiyu?"

Ji Kuqing said: "Yes! That brat is really troublesome!"

Ji Beiqing anxiously asked: "What is this decision of his? Tell me!"

Ji Kuqing said: "He has done what we feared most, he has openly revealed the contents of the Yama book of debts."

Ji Beiqing still remained dignified but stood up with surprise and said: "Could you repeat that once again clearly?"

Ji Kuqing laughed bitterly: "Repeating it again? The outcome is still the same, he exposed our secret also the secrets of a lot of other people. Even your affair with Yu Duhe is exposed."

Ji Beiqing was trembling and said hatefully: "I want to kill him.....I want to kill him myself....."

Ji Kuqing said: "It is too late now. I told you that killing him would be much easier, well now it is too late all the secrets Zhu Mei accumulated have been openly exposed."

Ji Beiqing said angrily: "It is not the time to question whose fault it is now!"

Ji Kuqing shook his head and said: "I am just telling the truth. Furthermore that brat is very cunning and has hidden himself very good, I have tried to look for him but in vain."

Ji Beiqing said: "That is just a matter of time. I want him to die painfully and slowly when get my hands on him."

Ji Kuqing said slowly: "We have another person we have to deal with."

Ji Beiqing asked: "Who?"

Ji Kuqing said: "Our arch-enemy-----Mr. Dongguo."

Ji Beiqing was surprised and asked: "What does he have to do with this?"

Ji Kuqing was now fuming with anger and said loudly: "That old goat is supporting the little brat now. Well, your initial plan to use that plaque and Yu Peiyu to deal with the old fool has failed miserably. Now we are in trouble because of it."

Ji Beiqing said angrily: "Are you still blaming me?"

Ji Kuqing sighed: "I am not blaming anyone now, there is no use of that now. Our main priority is dealing with the young and old fiends."

Ji Beiqing said: "Yu Peiyu is not difficult to deal with. But the old goat is quite troublesome."

Ji Kuqing said: "There is no other option now, we have to use Yu Fanghe now. Let him use his authority as the chancellor of Wulin to proclaim Yu Peiyu and old Dongguo as the enemies of the realm."

Ji Beiqing coldly scoffed: "Don't forget that his true identity is the infamous rogue, elusive cloud Yu Duhe. Will he that easily be used by us?"

Ji Kuqing said: "That wouldn't be too difficult. Not taking into account that you and he have a special relationship, he would not just stand by and do nothing. He too is mentioned in the Yama book of debts."

Ji Beiqing was still thinking and did not speak.

Ji Kuqing suddenly looked at the door and shouted loudly: "Who is there!"

A cold voice from the door said: "Friend or foe really depends on you."

They recognized the voice and looked at each other and when they saw the speaker both Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing looked awkward. The speaker was none other than the present chancellor of Wulin, Yu Fanghe.

"Yu Fanghe"/Yu Duhe looked at them and sneered: "Spare me your theatricals, please. It is only today that I know what your relationship is with each other."

Ji Kuqing looked at him and said: "So you think you had the lesser end of this alliance."

Yu Duhe said coldly: "Neither of us can say we have the better or lesser deal in our alliance. Furthermore there are too many unsolved issues between us, let us not dwell on those matters now."

Ji Kuqing said: "I have been sharing my wife for many years. What right do you have to be angry!"

Ji Beiqing angrily said: "Shut up! How dare you say such things in my presence!"

Ji Kuqing felt he was being mocked by the two of them now, he angrily left the stone hall.

After some time Ji Beiqing sighed: "You should not have come, you made things very awkward for me."

Yu Duhe said: "Well, I have to discuss this matter with someone."

Ji Beiqing said: "Do you mean the incident with the Yama book of debts being openly revealed."

Yu Duhe nodded and said: "It seems that you are also well-informed, forget everything else now. We should strike now and perhaps there may be hope for us after all."

Ji Beiqing shook her head and said: "It is too late now, the only thing we can do is kill Yu Peiyu and old Dongguo to avenge ourselves."

Yu Duhe said: "No, if we strike now we might have a chance to get out of this mess without too much damage."

Ji Beiqing said with surprise: "But the secrets are now exposed how can we change that fact."

Yu Duhe said: "Up till now it has been all hearsay. No one has actually seen the book of debts yet, so everyone in Wulin is still quite suspicious about the claims they heard."

Ji Beiqing said: "So what you are suggesting that we still have a chance to succeed, do you want me to accompany you in this matter."

Yu Duhe said: "Yes, I know where old man Gao lives. If my calculations are correct they should be there."

Ji Beiqing said: "Wait! I have to return to my mount first."

Yu Duhe was surprised and asked: "Why? This is more pressing than everything else."

Ji Beiqing said: "I have tricked Zhu Lei'Er back to my mount, with her in our hands we control Yu Peiyu."

Yu Duhe said: "Very well, I will go with you."

Ji Beiqing nodded and the two swiftly left the stone hall, but in their anxious mood they were too negligent and forgot that there are three people listening to their conversation.

Zhu Lei'Er and others followed Yu Duhe in and hid themselves in the stone hall and they even breathe very softly.

Now, that Yu Duhe and Ji Beiqing were gone they were still very careful and stayed hidden to be sure for some time.

After some time Hai Dongqing got up and sighed and stamped his feet: "I regret that I have a teacher like that! I hate myself for not discovering their secrets sooner."

Zhu Lei'Er said: "However I am most luckily, if not I would have been their captive if I went back to her mount."

Iron Blossom said: "We can talk about this another time, we have to get out of here and notify young master Yu immediately."

Zhu Lei'Er frowned and said: "But we don't know where he is now." Tears were welling up in her eyes.

Iron Blossom said: "That Yu Fanghe said that young master Yu is probably at old man Gao's place, if we follow that direction we might end up where we want to go."

Hai Dongqing said: "But we don't know where old man Gao lives, so we are still clueless."

Zhu Lei'Er mustered all her strength and said: "First things first, let us get out of this cave first. We should hurry, otherwise young master Yu might be taken by surprise by them."

So the three of them started to rush out of this tunnel, they did not know about the coming dangers.....they did not care.

In the early morning in an idyllic place, a place fit for immortals to dwell. In the distance one could hear a

waterfall, the only noise that disturbed the tranquil peace in this picturesque place.

Two figures moved swiftly towards the waterfall, judging from their movements both of them had superior martial arts.

In an instant they reached the top of a hill overseeing the waterfall, it was a magnificent scene. Grand and spectacular!

Dongguo Gao looked around and said: "Right, he should be around here. There is no other place he wants to go."

Feng San sighed with admiration: "When did he find a wonderful place like this to cultivate?"

Dongguo Gao smiled: "Not long ago he accidentally revealed to me that he found this spot to cultivate. I think only I know of this place in the entire world."

Feng San was looking around too and said: "Where is he?"

Through the sound of the waterfall an old voice said: "Why do the two of you keep following me around. You even managed to find my secret hiding place."

Mr. Dongguo was hanging upside down in a pine tree behind them, his long white beard covered up his face making him look like some sort of monster.

Feng San laughed: "You oldie! Since when have you rejuvenated, playing children's games here."

Mr. Dongguo said: "If you want, you can join me here. I can promise you that this a wonderful exercise in training martial arts."

Dongguo Gao kept shaking his head and Feng San laughed loudly.

Suddenly Mr. Dongguo propelled forward neither of them could see clearly whether he had turned around but there he was standing in front of them.

Feng San anxiously asked: "Where is my brother?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "What is all this fuss about? Are you afraid that I would kill him over his money?"

Feng San said: "Well, you can't blame us for thinking that. You took away your plaque used your ephemeral form dexterity to send my young brother flying. What is the meaning of that?"

Mr. Dongguo said loudly: "That is my rule, no matter who it is. I have to use the ephemeral form dexterity to test whether he is ready to learn my skill yet."

Feng San said with surprise: "That is your way to test whether someone is ready to learn your skill?"

Mr. Dongguo said casually: "Well, I can't be blamed for your lack of knowledge in martial arts theories. When I tested him I only used thirty percent of my internal power. People who have not reached the appropriate level will die on the spot, all the vital organs will have been shattered to a mere pulp. This young man is not bad at all, he did not even cough up any blood."

Dongguo Gao interrupted: "Yes, yes. But where is young master Yu now?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Well he is on a platform behind the waterfall. He is studying martial arts there."

Feng San said with surprise: "The noise of the waterfall is ear deafening, how can he stay there and study martial arts."

Mr. Dongguo said: "You really do have to brush up on your knowledge in superior martial arts theories, this is the beautiful part of the ephemeral form dexterity."

Feng San said: "Yes, I know that I have to brush up on that. But I just want to know what is going on here."

Mr. Dongguo stroked his beard and said: "The key of mastering the ephemeral form dexterity depends on the will and cultivation of the learner. If the will is strong enough, one would not frown if a mountain collapsed in front of one."

Let alone the mere sound of a waterfall, if the learner cannot withstand the rough sounds of the waterfall that means he is not ready to learn the ephemeral form dexterity yet. Without the will it is very difficult to produce the qi to master this skill. We will see if this child has the will to master this skill.”

Feng San asked: “How is he doing?”

Mr. Dongguo laughed: “He is doing better than I anticipated. I bet that within seven days he will have mastered the ephemeral form dexterity.”

Feng San said with amazement: “That fast?”

Mr. Dongguo said: “Anyone else would not be able to do that. But this child was born with extraordinary strength and he received a very strict training from his father. However he cannot be disturbed these seven days, otherwise his life might be in danger.”

Dongguo Gao asked: “Can we look at him from far away?”

Mr. Dongguo said with a bit of surprise: “Alright, otherwise you two would think I would have killed him and hid his body.”

The three of them walked over to a cliff, the three of them were splattered wet with the water and soon they saw Yu Peiyu sitting there with his eyes closed and looking very dignified.

It may seem easy for laymen, but even experts like Feng San and Dongguo Gao with powerful internal energies were feeling troubled hearing the waterfall’s noise here.

Yu Peiyu seemed to be oblivious to the sound, which was remarkable.

The three of them observed Yu Peiyu for awhile and Mr. Dongguo nodded at them suggesting they should leave him alone now, the three top martial arts experts left Yu Peiyu alone.

After walking back Feng San thought of something and asked: "So you used the ephemeral form dexterity to knock him unconscious and took him here to teach him your skill?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Of course, what else do you think I would. Play hide-and-seek with you lot?"

Feng San said: "So he was unconscious on his way here. Did he meet anyway on his way?"

Mr. Dongguo was stunned and asked: "What are you suggesting here?"

Dongguo Gao said: "On our way here, we heard that the contents of the book of debts were already exposed. Is that true?"

Mr. Dongguo laughed proudly: "Since the brat was sleeping I took the liberty of exposing it for him."

Feng San sighed: "Goodness me! You old fool, what have you done?"

Mr. Dongguo was confused and asked: "What do you mean?"

Feng San said: "My young brother Yu needs another seven days to master his skill, but I can bet that within three days Wulin will be thrown into chaos and trouble will be looking for the four of us."

Mr. Dongguo looked startled and said: "Damn! I got carried away and did not think it over thoroughly. Damn it!"

Dongguo Gao said earnestly: "We can only hope that they do not know how to find this place."

Feng San said: "Normally they won't find this place that easily. But because of the upcoming turmoil those implicated in the book of debts will try awfully hard to find us. I think we should prepare ourselves that this place will be discovered by them very soon."

Mr. Dongguo stroke his long beard and shook his head, he said: "Well, what done is done we cannot retract what we have openly exposed now. What we can do now is-----"

He did not finish his sentence and carefully observed the two of them.

Feng San said: "Well, continue. I mean our main priority is to protect young master Yu now. I am willing to throw in my old life to protect him."

Mr. Dongguo clapped his hands and said happily: "Right! I was waiting for this sentence of yours. Enough said, the three oldies here will guard him with our lives."

Dongguo Gao said: "Needless to say we have to guard young master Yu no matter what. But we must also calculate which experts would look for revenge or whose reputation have been damaged beyond repair by the book of debts."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Too many to mention.....Not counting the fake Yu Fanghe and brother and sister Ji. We have eighth squire Fu and eighth Madame Fu, master Nu, etc. Almost everyone in Wulin who is a bit famous is in the book, even you Feng San is mentioned."

Feng San was startled and pointed at himself: "Me?!? I have nothing to hide, have I?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Maybe you have forgotten about it yourself, but I clearly read it myself."

Feng San put out his hand and said: "Let me have a look, I want to see it myself. Let's see whether you are slandering me!"

Mr. Dongguo said: "I have put the book back into the robe of the brat, if you really want to know I will tell you now."

Feng San looked at him with surprise and said: "You?"

Mr. Dongguo laughed: "More than ten years ago, you were smitten by the top courtesan named Little Zhaojun (named after the famous classic beauty Wang Zhaojun*). Anyway in the end your gold ran up and you were chased out naked out of the brothel by the duenna."

{*Wang Zhaojun: One of the Four Classic Beauties of Chinese history. She was an imperial Concubine of the emperor Yuan of the Han dynasty. In the year 33 B.C. she chose to marry to the king of the Xiongnu tribe.}

Feng San quickly retorted: "I was not naked, I had my undergarments on."

Mr. Dongguo stroked his beard and laughed loudly: "Anyway it did happen, I just made up the part about being naked. Just to provoke your reaction."

Feng San's face turned red out of embarrassment.

Mr. Dongguo said: "Don't feel embarrassed! Even my old name is mentioned in the book of debts, my encounter was quite similar to yours."

Feng San asked: "Did you also often went to brothels when you were young?"

Mr. Dongguo shook his head heavily and said: "No, I had no such interest. But I was in love with a young Buddhist nun when I was young. But I could not get her affection and almost committed suicide over it."

Feng San and Dongguo Gao looked at each other with surprise and in a moment the three old men laughed heartily.

However somewhere else walking under the moon a girl walked by a stream. It was Zhu Lei'Er, she, Iron Blossom and Hai Dongqing decided to split up to look for Yu Peiyu. That way the chances of finding him were also bigger, but where could he be. The world is a big place, where is Yu Peiyu now?

She did not care, she only wanted to find him and warn him. She looked at the possible places Yu Peiyu could have gone and was not afraid to suffer, because Yu Peiyu meant everything to her.

With the last two days she has looked high and low for him and was exhausted but still no news on him.

Furthermore she has been very cautious, ever since she knew that Ji Beiqing had the intention of using her against Yu Peiyu she was afraid she would bump into her.

She also heard that the contents of the book of debts have been exposed openly, just like Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing said: "She was very worried about Yu Peiyu's safety."

For example this afternoon she saw a lot of Wulin people riding on horses riding on the main road, she overheard these people talking that they were looking for Yu Peiyu. She wished she could see him immediately now and tell him what she discovered.

Most important is that she has to tell Yu Peiyu that Ji Kuqing feigned his death and Ji Beiqing is their real foe and not Mr. Dongguo.

She could imagine Yu Peiyu's dire position now, at seeing that a lot of Wulin people were around here she guessed that Yu Peiyu should be somewhere here. Also she remembered that her third uncle used to refer to an [old man Gao] sometimes too, could it be that the old man Gao Feng San mentioned was the same person Ji Kuqing talked about? She could remember that her third uncle mentioned that old man Gao lived in these parts too. She was not sure but it was at least one clue she could investigate now.

After travelling without resting for two days she was really tired now and if she did not rest and eat she could pass out at any moment.

She finally saw a house in the horizon, it was about dinner time now. She could ask and pay for a meal there, but there were no lights burning in the house. She knocked on the door a few times and called: "Is someone here?" But there was no response and she hoped that this house was not abandoned, she carefully entered the house and hoped to at least find something edible inside.

When she pushed open the door something black and furry jumped her, she caught the thing and yelled out with fear.

When she took a closer look it turned it was just a big black cat.

She gently stroked the cat and said: "Dear little cat, where is your master?"

The cat looked at her with her green eyes filled with amazement. She cat purred.

Zhu Lei'Er almost forgot that the cat could not talk and patronized it like a child: "You must be hungry, let me find you something to eat."

She took out a paper flint and lit a lamp, suddenly she saw something familiar on a bamboo chair. It was the robe she made for Feng San, she recognized her own made robe. Could it be that this really was the house of old man Gao? That would be a wonderful coincidence.

But where would third uncle and old man Gao be?

In her excitement and happiness she forgot all about her hunger, at this point the cat jumped out of her embrace and ran outside into the fields.

The cat seemed to know where it was going, Zhu Lei'Er was surprised and thought the cat might be heading for its' master and followed the cat.

The cat continued to run forward but sometimes it would stop and look backward like it was afraid that Zhu Lei'Er would lose track of itself.

Zhu Lei'Er was also amazed and wondered where the cat would lead her too and followed closely. Fortunately it was a bright night and the moon lit up the fields making it easier for Zhu Lei'Er to follow the cat.

The cat kept running forward through bushes, over fields, across the stream. Suddenly Zhu Lei'Er felt something was amiss like someone was watching her, but she only cared about following the cat.

After following the cat for about four hours, she was blocked by a mountain. The cat stopped and purred to Zhu Lei'Er and started to climb the mountain, however Zhu Lei'Er was really too tired to climb the mountain she could hardly pace up with the cat now.

In a blink of the eye the cat was gone too, she could only hear the sound of a waterfall nearby. Because the mountain was very grand, she could not clearly distinct where the waterfall was. She really felt lost and did not know what to do, but she did not give in to this dire situation.

She mustered her strength and decided she should at least try to find the cat again and started to walk a few steps forward when a hand, a beautiful hand grabbed her right wrist.

This change happened too quick and Zhu Lei'Er was completely taken by surprise and Zhu Lei'Er turned around to look who or what grabbed her.

The first thought that passed her mind was a demon living on this mountain, but when she saw she captured by a most elegant and beautiful woman she was scared beyond her wits. She fell down and sat on the ground looking at this woman with surprise, shock and fear.

This woman was more dangerous than any demon and she stuttered: "Y...you.....?"

Ji Beiqing smiled: "Yes, it is me. Surprise isn't?"

Zhu Lei'Er did not know what to say now.

Ji Beiqing said: "I praised you that you were a good girl, why aren't you good now?"

She smiled: "I thought I ordered Dongqing to take you back to my mount, when I reached there no one was there."

Zhu Lei'Er shouted: "Why should I listen to you!" Her voice was loud and her tone was sharp, she regained her confidence and courage now.

Ji Beiqing said calmly: "Because those who listen to me will live on happily. You wish to live on happily, don't you?"

Zhu Lei'Er stood in defiance and sneered: "But I am still living now and I did not listen to you. I will never listen to you."

Ji Beiqing laughed: "Such a silly girl! Wait and see, you will find out what the consequences are of defying my wishes."

Zhu Lei'Er asked: "What do you mean?"

Ji Beiqing said: "Do you really want me to explain clearly to you? Very well, it might as well serve as a warning to you."

Zhu Lei'Er suddenly understood what she was getting at and was feeling very worried.

Ji Beiqing said: "Yesterday evening I started to follow you and by my other companions."

Zhu Lei'Er was worried and asked: "Who? Where are they?"

Ji Beiqing laughed: "Too many to mention, but I might as well reveal a few names. Master Nu, eighth squire Fu, eighth Madame Fu, Yu Duhe, Ji Kuqing and Tian Chixing.....and many more. They are all headed for the waterfall, do you know why?"

Zhu Lei'Er did not answer but her face turned pale.

Ji Beiqing said: "Well, they are going to pay a visit to an esteemed guest. You know that person by the way, I think you have been trying to look for him for these two days now. Without your help I would not have found him this fast, think carefully about what might happen to those who defy my orders."

Zhu Lei'Er stood there dumbstruck.

Ji Beiqing laughed sarcastically, but Zhu Lei'Er did not care and shouted loudly: "Peiyu.....Peiyu.....it is all my fault!"

She suddenly ran up the mountain, after two steps she was pulled back needless to say it was Ji Beiqing who pulled her back.

Zhu Lei'Er cried: "Madame Ji, I was responsible for the book of debts. You can kill me, but please spare young master Yu."

Ji Beiqing shook her head and sighed: "Love is really grand, isn't it? It can make people forget about their own lives."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Yes, I want to die! I don't want to see him hurt.....I am willing to die a thousand, a million times..... I will have no regrets....."

Suddenly Ji Beiqing turned very cool and said coldly: "But that is life, those who must die, shall die! Those who do not have to die yet, will not die!"

Zhu Lei'Er was stunned by her strange remark and asked: "Madame, who doesn't have to die?"

Ji Beiqing said: "You are a clever girl, you should know the answer."

Zhu Lei'Er felt like she was thrown into a bottomless pit, she knew that pleading would only make this vile woman happy. She started to run from her with tears still flowing from her eyes, suddenly she bumped into someone.

She looked up and saw a sinister face looking at her with an evil smile, it was a shade. That eerie, cold face with that strange smile wearing a black robe and red sabre in his girdle.

Zhu Lei'Er diverted her eyes from him, she was afraid of this monster.

Ji Beiqing said: "Take her back!"

And in an instant Ji Beiqing was gone, quicker than the appearance of the Shade.

Shade grabbed Zhu Lei'Er and carried her with one arm and swiftly moved away here, one could say that the Shade moved like a vulture making Zhu Lei'Er a poor chick.

She was terrified to be captured by this madman and did not know what to do, Shade laughed evilly at her: "Come, Shade takes you home now."

Zhu Lei'Er was even more afraid when she saw him smiling at her, in her terrified state she suddenly regained her sense and drew a short blade and stabbed him in the chest.

The Shade let go of Zhu Lei'Er but was still smiling: "Don't forget Shade can never be killed."

The events were too overwhelming for Zhu Lei'Er at this moment and she almost fainted.

Fortunately she heard a familiar voice calling: "Lei'Er, Lei'Er!"

It was the voice of her third uncle, the voice she knew from ever since she was an infant.

She called out: "Third uncle! Third uncle!"

After calling two times, she was pulled away by someone force. Feng San saw her like a paper being blown away by a powerful wind and gave chase to a second Shade who came.

Feng San saw that the person who abducted Zhu Lei'Er was a man wearing a black robe with incredibly fast movements and was almost gone in an instant. He quickly gave chase, suddenly he saw three figures moving towards the place where Yu Peiyu was studying. He had no choice but to break of his pursuit and propelled himself back to protect Yu Peiyu.

Ji Beiqing was standing 20 metres away from the waterfall and next to her where Ji Kuqing and Yu Duhe. The three of them were looking about and were hoping to find the person who yelled at them.

With their eyesights and the clear sky they could even spot a small rodent in the fields but after carefully looking around they could not see a thing.

Ji Kuqing could not control his temper anymore and shouted: "Who was it that spoke earlier! Show yourself before I start cursing!"

A voice said: "Are you blind? Can't you see my right in front of you?"

This time they heard it clearly, the speaker was hidden amidst a pile of rocks about 10 metres away from them. But the only thing they saw was a rock that was sort of swaying, Ji Beiqing grunted: "Oh, it is him."

Ji Kuqing was surprised and asked: "Who do you mean?"

Ji Beiqing coldly said: "Look closely, do you really think that is just a rock."

Ji Kuqing carefully observed better and said: "It looks like a grey sack."

Ji Beiqing said: "Exactly, the colour is the same as the stones. If you can't guess who that is now, you really are as stupid as a pig."

Ji Kuqing said loudly: "Of course! It is the sack of universal mystery. The preceptor of the sack is here."

Mr. Dongguo laughed: "Very good! Cuckold friend!"

And the bag rolled in front of the three, it was obvious that someone was in the bag because the bag was moving.

Ji Kuqing was furious when he heard the word [cuckold] and lifted his palm and struck at the bag. Ji Kuqing knew that old Dongguo often hid himself in the bag to make fun of people. The bag exploded and they heard a cry and a man rolled out of the bag vomiting blood.

Ji Kuqing looked stunned, both Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe were shocked too.

The man who rolled out of the bag was Tian Chixing and was heavily injured now.

Tian Chixing was one of the experts they enlisted to capture Yu Peiyu, somehow he must have been captured by Mr. Dongguo and put into his sack. Now Ji Kuqing had heavily injured him too.

Mr. Dongguo who was sitting on a stone was laughing happily, because he was rather short his long beard reached the ground covering his entire body. Normally it would be

funny to see such a scene, but Yu Duhe, Ji Beiqing and Ji Kuqing were not at all amused.

Mr. Dongguo stroked his long beard and said seriously: "Enough of this nonsense! Why aren't the three of you, husbands and wife at home? Why brings you here to my old place, could it be that you miss one more player for mahjong?"

Ji Beiqing was shivering with anger, that [why aren't the three of you, husbands and wife at home?] angered her to the bone, not to mention humiliated her deeply.

Both Yu Duhe and Ji Kuqing were furious and embarrassed too and wanted to kill this Dongguo old dog at once.

After awhile Ji Beiqing composed herself and said: "Mr. Dongguo is a renowned and respected Wulin dignitary, I believe if I have a question you would answer me honestly."

Mr. Dongguo laughed: "Well, Madame Dark Jade is really formidable. With only one sentence I have to be serious again."

Ji Beiqing said: "I just want to know if young master Yu is here."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Since all of you have come here, there is no point in saying no."

Ji Beiqing said: "Well, it is good that he is here. Would you ask him to come out, I have a few questions for him."

Mr. Dongguo looked a bit surprised and asked: "Do you want to instruct him to assassinate me again?"

Ji Beiqing shivered a bit with anger and said: "I was wrong there, I should have killed him on the spot. That way I would have had the plaque and the book of debts, that I would have controlled the entire realm."

Mr. Dongguo smiled: "It seems that this is the first time that you ever admit that you were wrong, especially in front of anyone. I feel most honoured."

Ji Beiqing laughed wryly: "It is too late.....too late. But there still one thing that isn't too late."

Mr. Dongguo asked: "What is that?"

Ji Beiqing said hatefully: "Kill him."

She emphasized these two words heavily, meaning she hated Yu Peiyu to the bone.

Mr. Dongguo said: "I was the one who openly exposed the contents of the book of debts."

Ji Beiqing was surprised and asked: "Did you really do that?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Why should I lie about something like that, it is the truth."

Ji Beiqing looked pensive and said: "Even so, he asked you to do it for him. Yu Peiyu is the guilty one."

Mr. Dongguo said: "So you really hold that little boy responsible is it?"

Ji Beiqing said politely: "I sincerely hope that Mr. Dongguo could keep out of this incident."

Mr. Dongguo said resolutely: "Nothing and nobody in this world can change my mind."

Ji Beiqing sighed: "If that is the case, forgive us for being rude."

Mr. Dongguo said: "If you don't want to be rude, I suggest that you leave now with your friends."

Ji Beiqing was a bit surprised to see old Dongguo this bold and said: "What do you mean, could you be more precise?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Ignorance is a bliss, remember that."

Ji Beiqing said: "Enough of this nonsense! There are two options for you, Mr. Dongguo. I am speaking on behalf of the realm, Mr. Dongguo you can choose with option you take."

Mr. Dongguo nodded and said: "Well, let me hear those options."

Ji Beiqing became very solemn and said earnestly: "Hand out Yu Peiyu and let him be trialed according to the directives set at the gathering of lakeHuang."

Mr. Dongguo loudly said: "Elusive cloud, Yu Duhe! Did you hear that?"

Yu Duhe was a bit surprised but remained calm and said: "Who are you talking to?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "I am calling Yu Duhe, which happens to be you."

Yu Duhe scoffed: "I think you are becoming senile, don't you even recognize the chancellor of Wulin Yu Fanghe."

Mr. Dongguo said loudly: "Yu Duhe, stop pretending! Your secrets have already been exposed now by the book of debts, if you continue to feign I will turn your elusive cloud into a dispersing cloud."

Yu Duhe looked furious but stayed silent.

Mr. Dongguo continued: "Did you hear the words of Madame Dark Jade?"

Yu Duhe said: "Of course I did, that is the main issue we are discussing at this moment."

Mr. Dongguo said: "I think this option is comparable to lodging a complaint against a thief in a den of rogues. Futile and stupid!"

Yu Duhe turned to Ji Beiqing and said: "Madame Ji, would you proclaim what the second option is?"

Ji Beiqing said hatefully: "Death!"

Mr. Dongguo stroked his beard and laughed happily: "Nope, I won't pick that option. I am not even married, I don't have any children. When I report to King Yama in the netherworld I will become a laughing-stock. Neither of your options appeal to me, can we discuss a third option, Madame Ji?"

Ji Beiqing was surprised and said: "A third option?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Let us solve all the problems in the realm once and for all, just give me seven days. That little boy Yu will be looking for you too, so don't worry you will bound to meet him soon."

Ji Kuqing loudly shouted: "Old Dongguo, stop stalling for time!"

Mr. Dongguo said calmly: "Is that my cuckold friend who is talking again? My...my temper, temper. No wonder the wife goes out a lot."

Everyone could hear he was mocking Ji Kuqing again, he leapt up and stormed forward towards Mr. Dongguo.

His attack from the sky was fierce and powerful, Mr. Dongguo stroked his beard one more time before leaping up too to engage Ji Kuqing. Mr. Dongguo raised his palm too both exchanged palm energies in mid-air, when the two forces met a small whirlwind was created. Mr. Dongguo floated backwards with three steps, Ji Kuqing made seven, eight somersaults backward and fell on the same spot where he stood before. Blood was dripping from the corners of his mouth and he was looking very pale.

Ji Beiqing sneered: "The ephemeral form dexterity of Mr. Dongguo is very powerful. Let me remind you that besides the three of us there are about ten odd top martial arts experts here too, I don't think you can deal with all of them that easily too."

Mr. Dongguo looked around and saw that indeed more than ten people were slowly emerging from the woods.

Mr. Dongguo said: "Are there more? Let me deal with all of them, I don't want to trouble the youngsters with trivial matters like this."

Ji Beiqing said: "It seems that Mr. Dongguo is not backing away from this."

Mr. Dongguo said: "It seems all of you are interested in sampling my ephemeral form dexterity."

All the other experts gathered behind Ji Beiqing now.

Ji Beiqing laughed: "Well, if that is the case Mr. Dongguo we have no alternative. By the way don't think we don't know where young master Yu is hiding."

Mr. Dongguo was surprised and looked at Ji Beiqing carefully with his sharp eyes.

Ji Beiqing said: "Let me tell you, we know he is hiding behind the waterfall."

Mr. Dongguo praised the keen eyes and intelligence of her in his heart.

Ji Beiqing said: "I urge to reconsider, because you are now dealing with the entire Wulin here."

Mr. Dongguo turned around and saw his brother Dongguo Gao and Feng San holding guard at the waterfall, he felt slightly secured now.

With the three of them they could not face all these experts but they had no other choice now.

Mr. Dongguo was not afraid and said loudly: "Good! I hope the three of you, husbands and wife will attack together. Don't forget that my universal sack can hold anything in this world, including repulsive sick people like you."

When all those experts heard the words of Mr. Dongguo they were scared, during the banquet of eighth squire Fu everyone fled when they heard his name. Now they were facing him in person.

Although no one was running now, but they all were very much afraid now and thought if they were on the losing side they would immediately surrender to Mr. Dongguo.

Now the time for negotiations were over.

Yu Duhe said loudly: "Master Nu, you lead a group to attack Dongguo Gao!"

Yu Duhe used his status as the chancellor of Wulin, Yu Fanghe to order these martial arts experts.

Master Nu replied and lead a group of eight martial artists to attack Dongguo Gao.

Yu Duhe turned to eighth squire Fu and said: "Eighth squire!"

Eighth squire Fu replied: "Here!"

Yu Duhe said: "Lead a group to attack Feng San, capture Yu Peiyu at all costs!"

Eighth squire Fu nodded and responded with [yes] and lead another group to attack Feng San.

All that remained were two and a half people, the two were Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe, the half was the wounded Ji Kuqing.

Yu Duhe stared at Mr. Dongguo with angry eyes and said: "I hope your sack is big enough to keep up us in there."

He leapt up and dashed towards Mr. Dongguo ferociously.

Yu Duhe struck with three palms making whoosing sounds, but the ever sly him avoided the palms Mr. Dongguo directed to him. It was obvious that Yu Duhe feared the ephemeral form dexterity of Mr. Dongguo and was afraid to engage it head on.

The palms of Mr. Dongguo were most powerful, the energy released send stones flying and leaves twirling. The energy he released formed an invisible forcefield around him.

Even Ji Beiqing looked startled and thought the old goat is putting everything he has in this battle.

After a few bouts, Yu Duhe was only retreating. Fortunately his strategy was to avoid instead engaging the enemy, otherwise he would have been wounded now by the omnipotent force released by Mr. Dongguo.

A black figure entered the fight, it was Ji Beiqing.

Her arms made a circle and she pushed out.

A loud Bammm could be heard, her top skill the pre-heaven seraphic energy collided with the ephemeral form dexterity.

Ji Beiqing backed away with several large steps, Mr. Dongguo was still standing but was swaying back and forth. Ji Beiqing looked at him with amazed eyes and Mr. Dongguo looked back angrily.

Suddenly Mr. Dongguo felt a palm attacking him from the back.

He shouted: "What kind of chancellor of Wulin are you! Attacking people in the back!"

He blocked that attack of Yu Duhe with the stance the willow swaying in the wind, not only did he block the attack but Yu Duhe could not deal with the remaining power in that stance and was flung backwards for about three metres.

He was almost severely injured, but luckily for him Ji Beiqing attacked Mr. Dongguo from the front with her pre-heaven seraphic energy, so Mr. Dongguo left Yu Duhe and directed his attention to Ji Beiqing again.

Now Mr. Dongguo was fighting both Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe, Ji Beiqing was quite concerned about Yu Duhe and said: "Chancellor Yu, don't engage him head on. Tire him out!"

This is what Mr. Dongguo feared because using the ephemeral form dexterity was quite fatiguing for the body, but if he did not use this skill he could not ward off these two top martial artists.

Mr. Dongguo looked at his brother and Feng San, he saw that those martial artists were gaining the upper hand on Feng San and Dongguo Gao. Feng San and Dongguo Gao were each facing seven, eight martial arts experts and they had to make sure that these people did not reach Yu Peiyu. Their situation was most dire.

Mr. Dongguo could not help them because he was being detained by Yu Duhe and Ji Beiqing, he looked around with his sharp eyes and saw a pile of dirt was between him and Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe.

He suddenly blasted that pile of dirt with his powerful energy, the dirt and sand were sent flying creating a dust cloud.

Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe retreated backwards and when the cloud settled, they saw Mr. Dongguo shooting towards the waterfall like a comet.

In mid-air he shouted: "The sack of universal mystery, the preceptor of the sack is here! Cowards, leave!"

He dashed towards eighth squire Fu.

Chapter 40 : Boundless Evil

She looked at Yu Peiyu with a face full of anger and sorrow and said: "After parting with you for three days one should really re-evaluate that person. This proverb is very true, you have mastered the ephemeral form dexterity haven't you?" Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, Mr. Dongguo has taught me this skill." Mr. Dongguo said anxiously: "Don't put the blame on me, little brat. Be careful that she gives me a hit with her pre-heaven seraphic energy."

Feng San was engaged in a fierce battle with eighth squire Fu and another seven martial artists. That roar of Mr. Dongguo struck fear into the hearts of these people, however such a roar would be useless against martial artists like these it will only reveal to your adversaries that you are attacking.

Nonetheless most of those martial arts experts started to run away, which was the intention of Mr. Dongguo, the fame of Mr. Dongguo sent these men running.

The name of the sack of universal mystery, the preceptor of the sack was imposing enough to scare these lot away. Also the group lead by master Nu were also running away now. But only eighth squire Fu and master Nu remained to fight, because with their reputation they could not afford to be scared away by a mere roar.

At this time Mr. Dongguo descended but the power of his ephemeral form dexterity was already released and came crashing down on eighth squire Fu.

He had no choice and gathered all the energy in him to block that blow, when the two forces met eighth squire Fu was flung about seven metres away.

This way Feng San was relieved from his dire position and Dongguo Gao had only one adversary that was master Nu.

A voice behind Mr. Dongguo shouted angrily: "Take this old Dongguo!"

Two figures attacked Mr. Dongguo again on the left was Yu Duhe on the right it was Ji Beiqing.

Yu Duhe generated his full power to that palm, it was doom or die here at this point and backing him up was Ji Beiqing.

Mr. Dongguo looked serious and generated his ephemeral form dexterity to accept the combined blows of Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe.

A loud bammm could be heard, when the three forces collided small whirlwinds were created in mid-air.

Mr. Dongguo staggered back with five paces, he felt nauseous and looked pale now.

The combined attack of Yu Duhe and Ji Beiqing is needless to say powerful, furthermore they gainen a strong advantage by crashing down on Mr. Dongguo in mid-air. But they still they were unable to injure Mr. Dongguo, eighth squire Fu was still lying on the ground and judging by his state he suffered from heavy internal injuries.

Yu Duhe wanted to attack again now, but Ji Beiqing told him to stop.

Ji Beiqing coldly looked at Mr. Dongguo and said: "For the past 40 years no one has dared to insult me."

Mr. Dongguo replied: "It pleases me that I am the first one."

Ji Beiqing said: "We are enemies and we will settle our scores some day. But not today."

Mr. Dongguo laughed: "It is not that you don't want to, but you don't have the ability."

Ji Beiqing said: "Say whatever you want! But inform young master Yu that within three days he should receive his trial set according to Wulin standards."

Mr. Dongguo asked: "What if he doesn't show?"

Ji Beiqing said: "That is up to him, but unfortunately a pretty young life will be wasted."

Mr. Dongguo looked confused and asked: "What do you mean?"

Ji Beiqing said: "Don't you understand? Zhu Lei'Er has fallen into our hands."

Feng San anxiously shouted: "What have you done to her?"

Ji Beiqing laughed casually: "Don't worry! She is being guarded by a shade, she will be fine for the next three days."

She now nodded towards Yu Duhe and he helped up eighth squire Fu and the two of them left. Just about when Ji Beiqing wanted to leave she felt a powerful force welling up to her, she returned the blow with her pre-heaven seraphic energy Feng San was forced back with three large paces.

She sneered: "Do you still want to fight?"

Feng San angrily roared: "If you don't hand over Lei'Er, you will not leave!"

Ji Beiqing said coldly: "I fear that you do not have such an ability, however with Mr. Dongguo on your side that is a different matter. However I should warn you."

Feng San angrily asked: "Warn us about what?"

Ji Beiqing said: "The Shades are trained by me, I created them. We share a powerful bond with each other and they know how I think. If my will desires, they will kill Zhu Lei'Er right now."

Feng San roared: "You dare!"

Ji Beiqing laughed: "To see whether I have the courage to back up my words is quite easy, strike your palms towards me now."

Feng San twirled his palms and was about to strike but he suddenly retracted his energy and gave Ji Beiqing an angry stare.

Ji Beiqing laughed, she felt very conceited at the moment. She added: "Master Feng San is a very clever man. Please inform young master Yu, that we will await his esteemed arrival in three days."

She elegantly but swiftly left this place, leaving behind master Nu who was still battling Dongguo Gao fiercely.

His palms were twirling about and his roaring fighting sounds also continued.

Suddenly from the corners of his eyes he noticed that another two men were standing close to him, Feng San and Mr. Dongguo.

He ceased his attack and paced backwards, he held a defensive position now.

Mr. Dongguo was laughing friendly: "Old Taoist, since when have you become a slave of Ji Beiqing?"

Master Nu looked back at Mr. Dongguo with his fierce eyes and said: "Who says I am her slave? I am not infatuated with that woman."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Oh, so you are working for the chancellor of Wulin."

Master Nu looked even fiercer now and said: "No such thing! Master Nu is not the kind of man to sway in front of the powerful!"

Mr. Dongguo said: "You leave me puzzled, why are you still here battling with everything you have."

Master Nu said: "Why should you even ask? That little brat openly exposed the book of debts to everyone, all of my embarrassing past is now revealed."

Mr. Dongguo looked pensive for a moment before saying: "Yes, I remember that part about you. Something about when you were young and that you knelt in front of Lady Zhu of the Palace of Enchantment and proposed to her, right?"

Master Nu said: "Yes!"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Because of that little trivial matter you are battling to the death!"

Master Nu said: "It is the most humiliating thing in my life, my reputation is my second life."

Mr. Dongguo said: "I think it is not worth fighting for. I was once in love with a Buddhist nun."

Master Nu was stunned and said: "I....I never thought you were that straightforward."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Let me open with you one more time, I was the one, on behalf of young master Yu, who exposed the contents of the book of debts."

Master Nu was even more shocked and stunned and said: "But I don't understand your actions, that way your humiliating incident will be exposed too."

Mr. Dongguo said: "My reasoning is simple, I want to restore the balance in Wulin."

Master Nu said: "Does that have to include exposing people's private embarrassing moments?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Yes, it does. Because this way we change that bad, dirty and hypocritical atmosphere in the realm of martial arts. With the book being exposed everyone has a new chance to redeem oneself and it will serve as an example to the younger generation to be more careful in their actions. We hope that by doing this we can avoid a lot of unnecessary bloodshed in Wulin."

Master Nu said: "But my reputation...."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Who doesn't have a few amorous escapades in their youth."

Master Nu lowered his head and muttered softly to himself: "That does make a lot of sense."

Mr. Dongguo said: "One group of people are beyond redemption, they should be severely punished for their past

crimes.”

Master Nu said: “Do you mean those lot?”

Mr. Dongguo asked: “Do you know the truth about the chancellor of Wulin, Yu Fanghe?”

Master Nu answered: “Of course, it was written clearly in the book of debts.”

Mr. Dongguo said: “Very good! But I hope you can repeat what you’ve heard about him.”

Master Nu said: “He was a rogue of the north with the nickname elusive cloud, he has committed numerous of unforgivable crimes. After he met Ji Beiqing, she altered his appearances to look like his older brother Yu Fanghe and his working together with Ji Beiqing now.”

Mr. Dongguo said: “Good! Could you also perhaps tell me what they are planning to do, in your opinion?”

Master Nu replied: “To rule Wulin, of course!”

Mr. Dongguo said: “It is good that you understand that. What will happen if Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing actually ruled over the realm? What will the outcome be of Wulin if sick and maniacal people like them ruled Wulin.”

Master Nu shook his head and said: “Too horrible for words!”

Mr. Dongguo said: “Exposing the contents of the book of debts is targeted towards those people. But there are people like you who are helping them in doing evil for trivial matters in the past. Don’t you feel ashamed of yourself?”

Master Nu was silenced, he really did not know what to say.

Mr. Dongguo said: “I have explained what we did, whatever your attitude and actions are is really up to you now. We won’t trouble you anymore tonight, till we meet again.”

Master Nu’s face turned red of embarrassment and quickly left.

Thus a fierce battle was concluded, but because Zhu Lei'Er was captured by Ji Beiqing Feng San was most worried.

Mr. Dongguo said: "Don't worry! That little girl will not be harmed for the next three days, I can guarantee that."

Feng San said: "Don't forget she is in the hands of the Shade, how are we going to deal with a strange monster like that in three days."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Yes, that is quite troublesome indeed....."

Dongguo Gao said: "Everything in the world has something to counter it, we just have to carefully analyse what the weak points are of the Shade."

Feng San said: "You can't even say he is human, he is not even a thing. He is just a phantom a real shade."

Dongguo Gao said softly: "Even so, he is just an object trained by Ji Beiqing and obeys her every command. There must be a way to counter it."

Mr. Dongguo said: "My brother is right, we will think of a way to deal with them. But let us not drop our guards, for all we know Ji Beiqing could come back right away."

Feng San and Dongguo Gao nodded and went back to guard the waterfall again.

It was dawn now, Yu Peiyu had now studied the ephemeral form dexterity for three days now. According to Mr. Dongguo he needed seven days to master this skill, so Yu Peiyu needs another four days to complete his cultivation. But the three days Ji Beiqing gave him only two days now remained.

The question is: Could Yu Peiyu come out in time to meet Ji Beiqing.

Feng San was the one who was most worried about this. Yu Peiyu was his younger brother and if he could not meet up with the three days limit, Zhu Lei'Er's life would be in peril.

Feng San asked Mr. Dongguo: "Do you think that it is possible that my younger brother will be able to finish his cultivation early?"

Mr. Dongguo replied: "Unlikely. Unless there is some strange occurrence I overlooked in my calculation."

Feng San asked: "How can one have a so-called [strange occurrence]?"

Mr. Dongguo looked a bit confused and said: "Well, there is no explaining that. One can only say it is something that happens randomly and cannot be achieved through hard work."

Feng San became even more gloomy when he heard that.

The three of them entered the waterfall and observed Yu Peiyu again from afar.

Yu Peiyu was still the same, he had his eyes closed and looked very dignified and tranquil. However there was something different about him compared to yesterday. His facial expression looked radiant and bright.

Mr. Dongguo exclaimed with surprise: "That is most strange!"

Feng San asked: "Why are you flustered all of a sudden?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Let us not disturb him, we will talk outside."

Outside the waterfall, three of them sat at the pile of stones.

Dongguo Gao asked: "Elder brother, what was strange? Are you referring to the bright and radiant facial expression of young master Yu?"

Mr. Dongguo nodded and said: "That was a most odd characteristic."

Feng San anxiously asked: "Is that good or bad?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Of course, it's good. That is the final stage of mastering the ephemeral form dexterity, he is three

days earlier than I anticipated.”

Feng San was very happy and said: “Three days? That means he will be finished contemplating tomorrow.”

Mr. Dongguo said: “Now, I am looking for answers. This is the so-called strange occurrence we talked about earlier, but I don’t understand.”

Dongguo Gao said: “I do. Young master Yu has profound and stable foundation, due to his excellent level in the martial arts of the XiantianWujiSchool. Which makes him only needing half the time to master the ephemeral form dexterity.”

Mr. Dongguo was very pleased and said: “You’re right, little brother. I forgot about that.”

He turned to Feng San and said: “Now, you can rest assured. We can face Ji Beiqing and her entourage one day early too.”

Feng San’s worries were gone, nonetheless he said: “It seems Lei’Er is destined to live, but.....”

Dongguo Gao said: “Why you are still worried about the Shade, aren’t you?”

Feng San nodded and said: “Yes.”

Dongguo Gao said: “I think I have a plan to deal with those shades, it shouldn’t be too difficult.”

Feng San quickly asked: “What is this plan of yours?”

Dongguo Gao said: “To deal with those shades we have to deal with Ji Beiqing first. These shades are created, trained by her sick, twisted character. If we can overpower Ji Beiqing, the shades will loose their direction.”

Mr. Dongguo clapped his hands in unison and added: “Right! That is they way to do it, if we want to save Lei’Er we have to capture Ji Beiqing first.”

Feng San said: “Allright, I’m going now.”

Mr. Dongguo asked with surprise: “Where are you going?”

Feng San said: "I am going to spy on Ji Beiqing, to prevent her from sneaking away from us."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Can't you wait one more day? By tonight the boy will have mastered the ephemeral form dexterity and the three of us will accompany him to face Ji Beiqing. That way we will make a grand entrance."

Feng San said: "But a lot can happen in one day, I am dying with anxiety now. I have to see for myself now."

Dongguo Gao said: "Very well, but don't engage them alone and take any actions yet. It will only make things more dangerous if you started to act alone."

Feng San said: "I understand, I will wait you for you there."

He turned around was gone in a few moments.

It was dusk now, the day passed very slow for Mr. Dongguo and Dongguo Gao. Fortunately Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe did not lead another attack against them and they passed the day talking to each other and enjoying the scenery around them. It seems that Yu Peiyu needed another extra few hours to master the ephemeral form dexterity and both could not leave at this critical point. A minor disturbance could be fatal.

SPLLLLLAAAAAASSSHHHH! The water stream of the waterfall was interrupted and the water was curled up. Two powerful water beams could be seen and the waterfall was interrupted by some strong force. It was most strange and grand to see such a mysterious phenomenon.

Mr. Dongguo was so happy that he was jumping up and down and yelled: "Wonderful, fantastic! This is the work of that little boy."

Dongguo Gao understood now that Yu Peiyu has mastered the ephemeral form dexterity and was testing his new skill on the waterfall.

The force which the water came down from the waterfall was incredibly strong but Yu Peiyu could use his internal strength

to stop the water from flowing down and used it to curl it up again.

Suddenly they heard a loud whistle clearly through the waterfall, the noise of the waterfall was very deafening but the whistle outvoiced it with ease. There was a white figure emerging from the water and the sound and the figure descended gracefully as a beautiful white crane.

The descention could be compared to a comet piercing through the sky and in a moment the figure appeared in front of the two Dongguo elders.

Needless to say it was Yu Peiyu.

Like normally he looked ever so tranquil and confident, like those impressive feats he performed did not cost any energy at all.

Mr. Dongguo laughed so hard with happiness, that it looked like his beard could fall off any moment.

Yu Peiyu knelt in front of him and kowtowed to Mr. Dongguo. He said: "Thank you, sir."

Mr. Dongguo stopped laughing and helped him up, he said: "What is up with all those kowtows?"

Yu Peiyu said: "I would like to thank you for teaching me the ephemeral form dexterity, sir."

Mr. Dongguo looked earnest now and said: "Don't try to trick me into becoming your teacher or so! You used the plaque of repay to exchange for the ephemeral form dexterity, that is it. You don't owe me anything and I just repaid my debt, so need to thank me."

Yu Peiyu said: "Although one could say that, but nevertheless....."

Mr. Dongguo quickly interrupted him: "Don't get sentimental now! While you were cultivating for four days a lot happened. Do have any idea what the grave changes are in Wulin now?"

Yu Peiyu shook his head and said: "I do not know, sir."

Mr. Dongguo said: "If I told you, you would think I would be gloating over my performances these past days. Ask my second brother here."

Dongguo Gao did not give Yu Peiyu the chance to ask and told him clearly what happened in these few days.

Yu Peiyu thanked him several times during his narration and was extremely worried when he realised that Ji Beiqing had captured Zhu Lei'Er and was being guarded by Shade.

After Dongguo Gao was finished he anxiously said: "I want to look for Ji Beiqing right away now."

Mr. Dongguo sighed: "No need to rush things! We will see her tomorrow. You need to rest properly for at least one day after learning the ephemeral form dexterity."

Dongguo Gao also said: "Zhu Lei'Er won't be harmed before the three days are up. My brother is right, you should rest properly for one day."

Yu Peiyu was feeling most anxious but all he could do is wait now.

Suddenly they heard purring sounds and cat swiftly came out of the bushes and rushed to the arms of Dongguo Gao, he caught the cat and stroked the fur of the cat gently. It was the same black cat which lead Zhu Lei'Er here.

Dongguo Gao smiled friendly: "Little kitten, where were you last night?"

The cat looked at Dongguo Gao and purred two times, like a wronged child complaining to its' gentle mother.

It was a clear night, the wind was blowing very hard and caused people to shiver. In a cave in a mount there was only one lamp that lit the dark cave. Sitting on a rock was a young girl, Zhu Lei'Er.

Zhu Lei'Er was imprisoned here from yesterday.

Within a short day she looked very sickly and sad, her lively spirit could not cope with the cold and eerie Shade next to her.

The Shade that never died.

When Zhu Lei'Er saw that smile that never left his face, she immediately got goosebumps.

Luckily after putting her here the Shade left her alone and was not in the cave with her.

Zhu Lei'Er thought about trying to escape but she also knew the chances of that were slim even practically none. She thought about dying too, when people are faced with a hopeless and helpless situation and when the spirit is weak death seems like the only option available.

Furthermore Zhu Lei'Er felt guilty, because she was too negligent. She did not even notice that she was being followed by Ji Beiqing and her accomplices, she practically lead them straight to kill Yu Peiyu.

What is the current status of young master Yu, she thought. This was the biggest question on her mind now, she feared for the worst for Yu Peiyu.

Ji Beiqing, Ji Kuqing and "Yu Fanghe" were all great martial arts experts with vicious and strange characters and now they have enlisted the help of other top martial artists.

Whenever she thought of that her heart would ache and she realised that she did not help him but in fact lead disaster to him.

She regretted why she was not more carefull, if she only was a bit more cautious the outcome would be different.

But there was no use in regret now, little good will that do. Regretting choices one made afterwards have proven to be futile over and over again history.

She was thinking to herself: I must die now. Even if young master Yu is allright, I cannot face him anymore.

The more she thought about it the faster she wanted to die. She was crying heavily now and she was heartbroken, she was sitting and tears kept flowing and flowing endlessly.

Suddenly she stopped herself from crying and sat up, her eyes looked tired instead filled with life like usual. It looked like she just recovered from a serious illness.

She finally made up her mind to die and stormed towards the wall with her head, the cave was filled with sharp stalacites and if she bumped into one with full force she would surely die.

She ran towards the stalagmites and bump she hit something soft and cold. When she looked up she was terrified again, she saw an eerie face looking at her with a strange smile on his face. She bumped into another Shade, he too was wearing a black robe and carrying a red sabre.

She backed away and sat down on the rock and closed her eyes again and did not want to see that awful scary face again.

After awhile she did not hear a thing and she secretly opened her eyes to look and saw she was alone in the cave, she thought that she must have been dreaming but her will to die was still there and decided to throw herself on the stalagmites again.

Like the previous attempt she bumped into something soft and cold-----Shade who was smiling to her again.

This time Shade talked: "Shades are afraid of death, so they hope others won't die either. Especially beautiful young women like you."

Zhu Lei'Er mustered her courage and said loudly: "You were not in the cave earlier, when did you crawl in?"

Shade smiled: "Have you forgotten that I am a shade, Shade goes and comes as Shade pleases. Don't you believe Shade? Let Shade show you!"

In an instant Shade was gone, disappeared into the shades.....

And mysteriously reappeared again in the dim light of the lamp smiling as usual.

Zhu Lei'Er yelled with fear: "Don't smile! I am very afraid of your smile!"

Shade said: "Shade only knows to smile, Shade looks very frightening if he cries."

Zhu Lei'Er sobbed: "Please go away! I don't like to see you."

Shade asked: "Will you try to die again?"

Zhu Lei'Er responded loudly: "That is my business, do not interfere!"

Shade said: "But Shade has to interfere. If your head looks like a squashed tomato you won't be pretty anymore."

All of a sudden there was the sound of a rock being moved.

Shade turned around and shouted: "Who is there?"

There was only a light sound outside, Shade turned around and looked at Zhu Lei'Er. He saw that she was startled and looked interrogatively and wondered who made those sounds.

Shade wanted to go out and investigate but suddenly he thought of something and spoke: "My friend, if you want to trick Shade into leaving the cave so you can save her.....you have used the wrong plan. Shade is not that easily tricked!"

A voice from outside scoffed: "Then let me fight you."

Zhu Lei'Er stood up with surprise and joy, she recognized that voice. In a flash the lamp went out and another figure was standing in the cave.

Zhu Lei'Er was exhilarated and called out: "Third uncle....."

She wanted to rush over to him and embrace her third uncle, but naturally Shade pulled her back.

Tssaannngg Feng San had drew his sword and pointed it at Shade and said angrily: "Release her and I will let you live!"

Shade smiled: "Are you lying to yourself? Don't you know that Shade can never die?"

Zhu Lei'Er forgot her fear and wanted to get out of this cave, she grabbed hold of Shade from the back and shouted: "Third uncle, quickly chop off his head."

Feng San twirled his sword and the head of Shade was cut off, when the head fell on the ground it was still smiling.

Zhu Lei'Er screamed with fear and ran into Feng San's embrace.

Feng San patted her on the shoulder and said: "Let us leave this place at once."

Zhu Lei'Er nodded with confusion.

Feng San pulled Zhu Lei'Er along and left the cave, all of a sudden they were blocked by a shadow.

When they took a good look at the shadow it turned it was a man in black robe and holding a red sabre, another Shade has come.

Feng San paced back with three steps and pointed at Shade: "You.....are dead....."

Shade laughed sinisterly: "Don't you know that the head of Shade will always stay at place, you were imagining things earlier."

Feng San was a bit startled to see these fearless strange "monsters."

He wanted to use his art of levitation to outrun this strange character, but in vain everytime Shade would block their way.

In such situation Feng San had no choice but to fight him again, the swordsmanship of Feng San was excellent and has reached the level of perfection. In an instant Shade was cornered by Feng San's web of sword stances.

However Shade was not impressed, he wielded his blade like a sea of sabres even if he could not shield himself on time he could still handle a few stabs.

Zhu Lei'Er had learnt from her previous mistakes and quickly left this place while Feng San was keeping Shade occupied.

Shade smiled: "Do you think you can escape from Shade? Do not underestimate Shade!"

Shade jumped out of Feng San's web of stances and followed Zhu Lei'Er. He had already blocked her, Feng San was most frightened. He thought in order to save Zhu Lei'Er the Shade has to be eliminated, not even Mr. Dongguo could save her from Shade.

But how does one stop Shade? The only way was to defeat the master of Shade, Ji Beiqing. But he knew that with his sword he could not defeat Ji Beiqing. To deal with this menace one had to destroy the root of this problem.

Suddenly he woke up from his thoughts by Zhu Lei'Er's cries: "Third uncle, save me!"

During her escape Shade has already captured her and was returning to the mount with incredible speed.

Feng San was startled and gave chase at great speed too but unfortunately Shade was faster than him. Feng San was shocked and heard the cries of Zhu Lei'Er gradually dying out and he lost track of Shade and did not know in which direction he left.

Feng San was feeling most troubled and frustrated now.

All of a sudden he heard the voice of Ji Beiqing through the whistling of the wind: "Master Feng San, don't you find yourself a bit too rude? Running amok on my territory."

He could only hear the voice and not see her in person.

Feng San replied loudly: "Madame Ji, I hope you could show yourself to me. I have a few questions for you."

Ji Beiqing said: "Do you think there is need for such an action?"

Feng San said: "Of course, I want to know exactly why you are holding Zhu Lei'Er captive."

Ji Beiqing replied: "It is simple, I just want young master Yu to show himself."

Feng San sneered: "With your fame and status in Wulin don't you find holding a young girl captive a bit too shameless."

Ji Beiqing said: "That depends on the situation, I regard Zhu Lei'Er as my guest at the moment and no harm will come to her now. However whether this situation will change it really debatable, besides....."

Feng San scoffed: "Besides your other shameless deeds have already been exposed, what does an extra one or two matter doesn't it?"

Ji Beiqing laughed: "You're absolutely right. Perhaps this why people say [a man with many debts is not worried and a flea-bag is not afraid of itching]. Since you understand my reasons I suggest you leave at once, when young master Yu arrives I will release Zhu Lei'Er."

Feng San angrily said: "I hope you can keep your promise and I can guarantee that young master Yu will not disappoint you."

After saying that he swiftly left the mount and was gone in an instant.

It was dawn now, the sun lit up the desolate ground. It looked very gloomy this place, nothing grew here. A young man in white robe stood there firm as a mountain and

carefully observed this place. Nothing suspicious so far, needless to say the young man was Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu was a bit surprised that everything here looked so peaceful and deserted, during his pensive mood he noticed three figures coming his way the movements of these three figures were extremely graceful and fast. In a instant they were standing behind Yu Peiyu, they were Mr. Dongguo, Dongguo Gao and Feng San, Dongguo Gao was still holding his cat in his arms.

Mr. Dongguo turned to Yu Peiyu and asked: "Boy, have you seen anything yet?"

Yu Peiyu answered: "Nothing suspicious."

Mr. Dongguo frowned and said: "We should be extra careful who knows what those threesome are up too."

Yu Peiyu nodded and suddenly said in the direction of opposite mount: "Yu Peiyu is here as requested, please show yourselves."

After he called out they saw a figure emerging from afar it was the so-called chancellor of Wulin "Yu Fanghe" or better known as the elusive cloud, Yu Duhe.

Following him were Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing.

Mr. Dongguo said softly: "They must have hidden themselves in one of those rat caves."

In a moment Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing were standing in front of them.

Ji Beiqing looked at Yu Peiyu carefully and said: "Do you remember what you said to me in that stone hall?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Are you referring to your plot in assassinating Mr. Dongguo?"

Ji Beiqing said: "And some other matters we discussed."

Yu Peiyu said: "If it wasn't for the book of debts and knowing the charades of your husband I would still be confused as to who my real enemy is."

Ji Beiqing said: "At such a young age, you have really gone overboard by exposing the contents of the book of debts."

Yu Peiyu retorted calmly: "Compared to the methods you used against my late father I still have a long way to go compared to you lot."

Ji Beiqing scoffed: "Because of a personal vendetta you have turned yourself into the public enemy of Wulin."

Yu Peiyu said: "I knew that would be a consequence but in order to return justice and good to the realm, I don't need any second thoughts."

Ji Beiqing said: "Let me first comment that I respect your tenacity, but you cannot escape your punishment."

Yu Peiyu smiled: "We shall see, but one should always take both the best scene and the worst scene scenario in account in life. I think Madame Ji understands what I mean?"

Ji Beiqing said: "Do you mean what we will do if we cannot capture you?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Precisely."

Ji Beiqing sneered: "No need to trouble yourself about that young master Yu."

She now turned to Mr. Dongguo and said: "As you can see this is now a matter of doom or die, can you see that?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "I am not senile, I can see the situation crystal clear."

Ji Beiqing said: "Very good! This is your last chance to back out of this matter, once you're dragged into this whirlpool there is no coming back. I urge to think carefully about your decision."

Mr. Dongguo said: "I don't need to think about it at all, I will not back out of this."

Ji Beiqing said: "Alright, none of you shall leave."

Mr. Dongguo laughed: "I am an old man I have been spending practically my entire life listening to threats. Don't overestimate yourself, Madame Ji?"

Ji Beiqing grunted and made a gesture to Yu Duhe, Yu Duhe took out a flag and was waving it about.

That was the flag of Wulin and was only used when Wulin faced imminent danger. The flag represented the power and authority of the chancellor Wulin, as a martial artist in the realm one had to obey the flag and the chancellor no matter what.

Suddenly from behind the valley about 300 martial artists appeared and were marching up the mount slowly, amongst these people were also the 13 leaders of the great orthodox schools. It was a most grand event now, not inferior to the gathering months ago at Lake Huang.

Ji Beiqing laughed very happily: "Mr. Dongguo, can you see this? What will become of you now?"

Mr. Dongguo was stroking his long beard and said softly: "You have some powers of persuasion, impressive....."

Ji Beiqing said: "Having regrets now? But it is too late now!"

After her shout Yu Duhe waved his flag again. The signal for a mass attack, the 300 martial artists could only advance and not back off as stated in one of the agreed directives as the gathering of Lake Huang.

Yu Peiyu was feeling most frightened now, what would happen a great massacre was about to happen.

However something odd happened the more than 300 martial artists did not advance forward just stood there watching ignoring the flag's directions.

Whoosh, whoosh, whoosh.....

Yu Duhe was startled and used his internal power to wave the flag a few more times almost breaking it but in vain nobody moved.

Yu Duhe put away his flag and yelled furiously: "You dare to disobey the commands of the chancellor of Wulin!"

His voice travelled far and loud throughout the mountain area.

A clear deep voice replied: "Unfortunately you are not old man Fanghe, you're just the rogue elusive cloud Yu Duhe. You are just a puppet put on place by Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing. Do you expect us to follow your lead after knowing your true identity?"

Yu Duhe was shocked and stunned now. Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing were both angry and shocked and were trembling.

The realm of martial arts was a place which was strange and sometimes downright cruel but the justice and righteousness were two concepts that still existed in this hard world. And these concepts would often resurface when things look awfully dire.

Yu Peiyu had tears in his eyes from gratitude, for months he has been wronged and finally people started to believe him.

Mr. Dongguo stroked his beard happily and said: "Madame Ji, this is unexpected turn of events isn't it?"

Ji Beiqing scoffed: "There is nothing to be happy about, unless I, Madame Dark Jade, perish on the spot I will still extract my revenge on you."

Ji Kuqing roared and raised his palm towards Mr. Dongguo, he did not fight him but glided away from his stance.

Mr. Dongguo said to him loudly: "Cuckold friend, the boy is here. You really should look for him instead of me, he gave me the book of debts."

Ji Kuqing was a bit stunned by his words and stood there surprised.

Yu Peiyu said: "Mr. Dongguo is right, you should be looking for me. After you."

Ji Kuqing laughed evilly: "I won't kill you, I will take you back to my stone hall and turn you into a wax figurine. This time I won't miss out on that opportunity."

He raised his palms and generated his full power to his hands and stormed towards Yu Peiyu, Yu Peiyu's twirled his palms up and received the attack.

Bammm, the two powerful forces met each other creating small forcefull winds. In a blink of an eye Ji Kuqing was flung seven metres away and called out tragically. When he landed on the ground, he coughed up blood and died.

He still gazed at Yu Peiyu with disbelief in his eyes like he could not believe that he could not even withstand one blow from this brat.

Ji Beiqing was completely dumbstruck and stood there motionless.

Ji Kuqing was not only her brother but also her husband and when she saw the liveless body of Ji Kuqing her heart ached. But she remained dignified, which was truly awesome and only a few tears could be seen through her veil.

She looked at Yu Peiyu with a face full of anger and sorrow and said: "After parting with you for three days one should really re-evaluate that person. This proverb is very true, you have mastered the ephemeral form dexterity haven't you?"

Yu Peiyu said: "Yes, Mr. Dongguo has taught me this skill."

Mr. Dongguo said anxiously: "Don't put the blame on me, little brat. Be careful that she gives me a hit with her pre-heaven seraphic energy."

Yu Peiyu understood that Mr. Dongguo reminded him to be careful that Ji Beiqing could attack at any time with her pre-heaven seraphic energy.

Like Mr. Dongguo said Ji Beiqing suddenly attacked Yu Peiyu with her pre-heaven seraphic energy with incredible force and speed. After hearing Mr. Dongguo's words Yu Peiyu had

already prepared himself for a possible attack from her and returned a blow back.

A loud: Bannnggg could be heard, the outcome was of course different from Ji Kuqing's.

Both the ephemeral form dexterity and the pre-heaven seraphic energy were strong and powerful skills, when the two forces collided small whirlwinds were created dust and leaves in a radius of 4 metres were flying around. People standing close felt pain because of the energy released.

The dust slowly settled and two figures were still standing there, Yu Peiyu looked like he was trying to regain his balance and Ji Beiqing was feeling nauseating.

Mr. Dongguo was laughing happily at the side.

Ji Beiqing looked shocked and surprised now, it was unbelievable. Learning the ephemeral form dexterity in such a short time is quite amazing but even more startling is reaching such a high level in only a matter of days. The pre-heaven seraphic energy of Ji Beiqing could only overcome by Mr. Dongguo now there was another person who could meet her match.

Suddenly a loud roar could be heard and man was running over with amazing speed and stopped next to Ji Beiqing. It was Yu Duhe, he lost his status as the chancellor of Wulin and looked furious and his anger was focussed at Yu Peiyu.

Mr. Dongguo said: "No need to get angry, you should even thank the boy here."

Yu Duhe asked fiercely: "What do you mean?"

Mr. Dongguo pointed at the corpse of Ji Kuqing and said: "He ridded you of a rival, now you can openly be with Madame Ji. No need for being sneaky in the future."

Before he could say anything else he felt a surge of energy coming towards him. The words of Mr. Dongguo were too degrading and Ji Beiqing felt humiliated.

Mr. Dongguo and Ji Beiqing were engaged in battle now, Yu Duhe drew his sword and attacked Yu Peiyu ferociously with his sword. His web of swords ensnared Yu Peiyu, he was now the elusive cloud again and did not have to pretend to be a gentleman anymore. All he wanted to do is chop Yu Peiyu in little bits, Yu Peiyu avoided more than ten stances. Finally he saw the chance to draw his sword again.

The wielder was as beautiful as jade and the technique was like a rainbow and everyone cheered with surprise to see this stance, Heaven filled with stars. More than 300 pairs of eyes were directed to Yu Peiyu and Yu Duhe, nobody spoke and all their undivided attention was focussed on these two men.

Tsing, tsing, tsing.....tsing, tsing, tsing.....

Two figures were twirling their swords around and their bodies moved fantastically fast, they could only see webs of sword stances. Making it difficult to tell who was gaining the upper hand.

All of a sudden there was a clear clang noise and something metallic flew into the sky, now some people were shouting: "His sword has broken."

The fighting stopped and Yu Duhe and Yu Peiyu were facing each other again, Yu Duhe was holding a broken sword and was sweating heavily looking surprised. Yu Peiyu looked graceful and elegant as usual, it was obvious that Yu Duhe was no match for Yu Peiyu.

In that intensive but short battle Yu Peiyu generated the ephemeral form dexterity into his sword, if not how could he break Yu Duhe's blade that fast.

Mr. Dongguo and Ji Beiqing were evenly matched and they both stopped to see the outcome of the Yu battle.

Yu Duhe was presented another sword, it was given by Yu Peiyu.

Yu Peiyu looked angry and said: "You're my second uncle, but your crimes and actions have dishonoured the family Yu."

Yu Duhe's eyes spat fire and remained quiet.

Yu Peiyu said: "Because of the ancestors of our family and because you are still my second uncle I cannot kill you. Use this sword to take your own life."

Yu Duhe looked very troubled and nobody could guess what he would do.

Everybody stared at uncle and nephew and wondered how this would end, Yu Duhe picked up the sword Yu Peiyu threw in front of him.

Suddenly he stabbed towards Yu Peiyu with amazing speed, all the heroes watching called out with surprise. This special technique Yu Duhe was both lethal and strange and Yu Peiyu did not see this attack coming. All the heroes were worried about his safety.

The sword flashed in the sunlight and Yu Peiyu made a short, low grunt. The heroes saw that Yu Duhe was forced away from Yu Peiyu by a strong energy. It was Mr. Dongguo who intervened now and used his ephemeral form dexterity to push Yu Duhe away, Yu Peiyu only had a flesh wound on his arm.

Mr. Dongguo gazed at Yu Duhe with his sharp eyes and said earnestly: "Some impressive stance that was, Yu Duhe! If you have any shame or decency of a martial artist you should take your own life now."

Yu Duhe looked sinisterly and laughed evilly: "Before I commit suicide I want the heads of two men, the first one is yours!"

Mr. Dongguo said: "Excellent, I wanted to help the boy after all. I will deal with the despicable fiend like you on his behalf."

Yu Duhe laughed tragically but also sinisterly: "I will grant you your wish."

He roared and advanced forward wielding his sword to surround Mr. Dongguo. Mr. Dongguo engaged him with his bear hands but did not dare to be overconfident.

Both knew that this a battle between life and death and used their best skills in this battle. The one twirled his palms like a wall of energy, the other wielded his sword like a sea of blades, but waited for an opportunity to arise to attack with a lethal blow.

Now all the heroes called out with shock and surprise, they heard two different sounds bamm and fssstt after both exchanged their lethal stance the outcome of the battle was also evident. Mr. Dongguo's right arm sleeve was cut off and Yu Duhe was flung aside by the ephemeral form dexterity and vomitted blood before he died, all his vital organs were shattered to pulp.

All the heroes cheered loudly.

Yu Peiyu stood there completely dazzled, he did not know what to feel.

At this point Ji Beiqing leapt up and run up the mount.

Mr. Dongguo hurriedly ordered: "Brother, accompany the lad to look for Shade. The life of that girl is still in his hands."

Yu Peiyu and Dongguo Gao nodded and quickly went to the cave.

Mr. Dongguo and Feng San gave chase to Ji Beiqing, they could not let her escape today.

The heroes who were here also divided into two groups one group followed Yu Peiyu and Dongguo Gao, the other group followed Feng San and Mr. Dongguo. They wanted to know the outcome of these fights.

The entrance of the cave was blocked by a stone tablet, the surroundings of this place were most desolute and gloomy.

Yu Peiyu was worried sick about Zhu Lei'Er smashed the tablet with one blow and debris flew all around.

Even with their sharp eyes they could not clearly see what or who were in the cave.

Suddenly a voice from inside said: "Who is it? Who dares to disturb Shade?"

Yu Peiyu shouted: "Hand over Zhu Lei'Er! Or else I will level this cave down with you in it."

Shade said: "You cannot scare Shade, if you want this beautiful young woman to die too you should try to level this cave. However Shade still wants to fight you."

Shade sort of tavelled like fog and was standing in front of Yu Peiyu in a moment holding Zhu Lei'Er's right wrist tightly. Yu Peiyu saw two streams of tears running from her eyes and she called out with extreme joy: "Young master Yu....."

She could not speak now, she was sobbing. Shade looked very pale and was still smiling awfully.

Yu Peiyu yelled: "Release her!"

Shade said: "Feng San failed last night, don't you know that it is futile."

Yu Peiyu said: "Today you have to release her."

Shade said: "Unless you kill Shade first, but Shade cannot die."

Yu Peiyu did not know how to handle this situation, he knew that Shades were not afraid of swords or sabres. Initially he wanted to use the ephemeral form dexterity strike him down, but he was afraid that the power of the ephemeral form dexterity was too awesome and might wound Zhu Lei'Er too.

Zhu Lei'Er looked both frightened and shocked, she looked very sad now and not seeing her for days she was very frail and sickly now.

Yu Peiyu had no idea what he could do to save her, but he could not let Shade leave this place.

The cat in Dongguo Gao's arm purred to Zhu Lei'Er, like it saw a familiar face.

Yu Peiyu decided to attack at once, his fists and sword made the surroundings turn pale with fear. The force he emitted was magnificent, but like Yu Peiyu guessed his sword made no impression on Shade. He would even laugh when he was stabbed or cut, he was wielding his sabre with one hand and held Zhu Lei'Er tightly with his other hand.

Zhu Lei'Er would scream out of fear when she saw Shade's bloody body and he was still smiling sinisterly. After a hundred bouts they were still no step closer in saving Zhu Lei'Er, Yu Peiyu knew that after a thousand stances the result would still be the same.

Zhu Lei'Er revealed a desperate and hopeless expression and said: "Young master Yu.....Don't mind me anymore.....I will only be a burden to you."

The cat of Dongguo Gao was purring loudly towards Zhu Lei'Er like it seemed to understand that Zhu Lei'Er was in danger and looked like it would attack Shade at any point.

While Yu Peiyu was fighting he said: "Lei'Er, don't despair! I will save you from this monster's hands."

Zhu Lei'Er was touched and tears were welling up in her eyes.

Dongguo Gao looked worried too and wondered what way there was to save Zhu Lei'Er from this strange creature, all of a sudden Shade stopped fighting and was muttering something strange and incoherent like he was talking to an invisible person.

Yu Peiyu was surprised too and stopped advancing and carefully observed him.

Shade now turned to Yu Peiyu and smiled: "Young master Yu, I have some bad news for you."

Yu Peiyu asked: "What is it?"

Shade said: "Madame Ji spoke to me earlier and I gave me an order. Do you know what that order is?"

Yu Peiyu said: "How should I know your nonsense?"

Shade pointed at Zhu Lei'Er and said: "Madame Ji said that she lost her value and told me to kill her immediately."

Yu Peiyu was so frightened that he paced back with one big step and said: "You dare!"

Shade laughed: "It is not a matter of daring or not, but Shade finds it a pity to kill a pretty young woman like her."

He drew his sabre again and said: "But Shade has no choice and will never defy the orders of my master."

Shade was still smiling and raised his sabre to hack at Zhu Lei'Er's neck.

Suddenly Yu Peiyu flung his sword across and Shade blocked the sword but he could not hold on to his sabre and was forced backwards by Yu Peiyu's powerful internal strength.

Zhu Lei'Er saw an opportunity to break free from Shade's grip and quickly ran towards Yu Peiyu.

Shade laughed: "Escape? No one escapes from Shade."

He closely followed Zhu Lei'Er again and soon caught up with her, there was still some distance between her and Yu Peiyu.

Shade had already picked up her sabre and wielded it again and was about to hack at Zhu Lei'Er in the back, not even Yu Peiyu might be able to rescue her in time.

In this most dangerous and tense moment everyone's heart skipped a beat, when suddenly Dongguo Gao's cat jumped towards Shade. The paws of the cat reached Shade's face and when Shade realised that a black object leapt towards him he twirled his sabre back to protect his face.

The cat purred loudly in pain: "Miaoooooooo....."

The toes of the cat were chopped off by Shade's blade, the blood of the cat splattered in Shade's face. Zhu Lei'Er caught the wounded cat and saw it was twisting and turning in pain.

But now a strange thing happened Shade fell down and was turning and calling out in pain too. Both Yu Peiyu and Zhu Lei'Er were stunned and shocked to see this, only Dongguo was smiling and recited softly:

"Amitabha.....Amitabha....."

In a blink of an eye Shade was melted to a mere pool of blood and pus, Yu Peiyu cautiously looked around and was afraid that Shade would reappear somewhere else again. That was something that Shades often did.

Dongguo Gao smiled: "Don't worry, young master Yu. Shade will not appear again, ever."

Zhu Lei'Er and Yu Peiyu looked at him confused.

Dongguo Gao stroked his cat gently and said: "This is was something nobody expected but Shade was killed by Miao mi and her paws had destroyed Shade forever."

Yu Peiyu said in a surprised tone: "I have heard that the blood of a black dog can repel evil, but the blood of a black cat can too?"

Dongguo Gao said: "Yes, of course. This is a good example of it."

Zhu Lei'Er embraced the black cat tenderly and kissed several times, she softly said: "Dear Miao mi. Because of me you are injured heavily."

The cat seemed to understand what she said and purred sweetly, Yu Peiyu gave the cavern one more good look before he, Dongguo Gao and Zhu Lei'Er left this awful cave. Zhu Lei'Er was tending to the wounds of the cat while she followed Yu Peiyu closely and when they descended from the mount the cat was already bandaged.

Yu Peiyu saw Feng San and Mr. Dongguo instantly and rushed over to them, Feng San was thrilled to see Zhu Lei'Er unharmed.

When Mr. Dongguo and Feng San heard how they defeated Shade they were both most surprised.

Yu Peiyu asked: "Where is Ji Beiqing?"

Mr. Dongguo said: "We pursued her to here but we lost track of her now. She must have hidden in one of the caverns here."

Dongguo Gao said: "We must find here before she can find a way to escape."

All of them nodded in agreement.

Looking down from the deep cliff they noticed that nobody has ever been here before, it was only accessible for birds and animals.

When everyone was trouble about how to find Ji Beiqing, they suddenly heard Mr. Dongguo yelling: "Over here! Ji Beiqing must be hiding here."

All of them rushed over where Mr. Dongguo was standing, they saw a cavern in the shadow of the mountain. The cave looked very deep and dark.

Yu Peiyu said: "Mr. Dongguo is right, look there are fresh marks over there."

Mr. Dongguo said: "Well, let us not debate anymore. Let us all enter together."

They made a fire and carefully entered the dark cave, they looked cautiously and hoped to find a trace of Ji Beiqing. When they turned another corner they saw her.

She was sitting on a stone with her eyes closed like a monk in meditation. All of them were cautious now but walked slowly towards her, but she was still sitting there motionless oblivious to their presence.

Mr. Dongguo finally sighed and shook his head: "She has taken her own life in the end."

The rest were surprised and looked closely to see Ji Beiqing, Madame Dark Jade, sitting ever so beautiful, ever so elegant and dignified like she was alive.

All of them were relieved that this was finally over and walked out of the cave again, as soon as they walked out of the cave all the heroes cheered. A lot of voices shouted happily: "Young master Yu, we hope you can become the new chancellor of Wulin!"

"Right! We hope you can continue late master Yu Fanghe's principles and lead the realm to a new prosperous and peaceful era."

"We support you without hesitation! Let us all restore glory to Wulin!"

Mr. Dongguo was very happy and he was glad that this turmoil in Wulin was finally over. But what lies ahead for the realm? Nobody could answer that question, the heart of men is easily subjected to change comparable to the unpredictable weather.

The only way is to walk cautiously ahead and drift along with the tide.

Yu Peiyu has avenged his father, he slowly walked away from this mountain feeling confused. He had a lot on his mind, he thought about Lin Daiyu, about the future of Wulin and his future responsibilities. Furthermore not far behind him was a young girl holding a cat in her arms, she was Zhu Lei'Er who gradually came out of her shock.

She too was feeling confused at the moment, but one thing she was certain of-----wherever Yu Peiyu went she would follow. The oceans may dry up, stones may rot, heaven may turn chaotic and earth may grow old but her heart will never ever change.

Translator's Epilogue

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When I first finished the novel in October 2002, I could not deal with the unsatisfying ending written by Qiao Qi. Gu Long and Qiao Qi stopped [the story] when Yu Peiyu walked away when Ji Beiqing died. I felt unsatisfied and wrote an epilogue -- Athena.

As Yu Peiyu walked along the path down he saw two figures running towards him. They were two beautiful young women and who looked at Yu Peiyu with joy, excitement, and also sadness, they were Lin Daiyu and Jin Yanzi. Yu Peiyu felt surprised, happy, shocked and sad to see them both. Especially Lin Daiyu, she looked pale and fragile even more than the last time he saw her.

There were tears in her eyes of joy and sorrow, Yu Peiyu did not know what to do. In an instant the two girls were standing in front of Yu Peiyu.

Lin Daiyu said softly:"You...."

At the same time Yu Peiyu said:"You....."

Both stopped and looked awkwardly at each other, it was Jin Yanzi who broke the silence and said:"This must the famous Miss Zhu, sister Lin and I have heard many thing about her. Young master Yu, sister Lin and I have become sworn sisters now."

Lin Daiyu secretly looked at the girl who was standing behind Yu Peiyu and was impressed and in awe by her beauty, Zhu Lei'Er also observed Lin Daiyu closely and praised her in her heart.

Zhu Lei'Er said softly:"I.....I will go with third uncle now." And her eyes were red and she looked a bit melancholic.

Yu Peiyu stuttered:"Lei'Er, I....."

He did not know what to say now, fortunately Jin Yanzi pulled Zhu Lei'Er by her hand and said:"Little sister, come let us give them two some privacy. I would like to know you

a bit better."

Jin Yanzi gently pulled Zhu Lei'Er along and giving Lin Daiyu and Yu Peiyu some privacy.

After awhile Yu Peiyu said gently:"How.....I am most sorry. I.....I.....should have taken better care of you...."

Lin Daiyu with tears in her eyes said softly:"No, you don't have to apologize. I understand you did not want to see me in danger. But.....but.....did you know that I will die if anything happened to you?"

Yu Peiyu sighed:"I won't be able to live with myself too if anything happened to you."

Lin Daiyu looked into Yu Peiyu's eyes deeply and thought: It was all worth it, just hearing this. Everything I went through is not in vain.

She hugged him and all her worries and sadness were gone, there was only love and affection.

Yu Peiyu was not an eloquent man when it came to expressing his feelings, he now gazed into her eyes and gave her a deep kiss on her lips. That was his way to show his feelings for her, actions over words.

Love is in the air.

Yu Peiyu sat on a rock holding Lin Daiyu in his arms, they just enjoyed each other's company. Still Yu Peiyu was a bit confused and asked:"How come you are here too? And why did the 13 leaders suddenly change sides?"

Lin Daiyu smiled:"When Madame Hai Tang received an order from Yu Duhe to lead the Baihua Association against you, I was startled and shocked. Jin Yanzi and I thought that we had to find a way to stop this from happening, for the last few months Jin Yanzi and I have been investigating the man who is impersonating my father and those other imposters too. After following them for some time we finally discovered the headquarters of Yu Duhe."

Yu Peiyu asked:"Where is this headquarters of theirs?"

Lin Daiyu said:"They were very cunning and had bought a big mansion in the city of Chengdu and had people fooled

that it was the residence of an retired government official. After we found out about this place we informed master Hong Lian of the Beggars Association to spy on it. Few days ago the disciples of the Beggars Association reported that there were strange activities around the mansion, the servants of that place looked frantic and worried. That is also when we heard about the secrets of the Yama book of debts being exposed and Yu Duhe ordered a punitive expedition against you. Madame Hai Tang had no intentions of helping them but had no choice because she had to obey the wishes of the chancellor of Wulin, unless there was proof that he was not really old master Yu Fanghe. However Madame Hai Tang said that if someone could provide evidence everything will be different, hinting to us that she would offer her support in search for proof. We concluded that the Yu mansion would not be that heavily guarded now and Jin Yanzi thought it would be wise to contact master Hong Lian too about this. Suffice to say that with combined forces of the Baihua and Beggars Associations we attacked the mansion and captured some leading figures of Yu Duhe. Like Ximen Feng but Lin.....that fake Lin person escaped. With Ximen Feng and others as witnesses we could persuade the other schools to cease their actions against you too." Yu Peiyu began to understand and was really touched by the efforts of Lin Daiyu, Jin Yanzi, Hong Lianhua and Madame Hai Tang.

Yu Peiyu suddenly asked:"How did you meet up with Jin Yanzi in the first place?"

Lin Daiyu answered:"Master Hong Lian wrote a letter to Madame Hai Tang asking us to protect her, there was some incident in which she was involved at the Tang Manor some months ago. Although she was cleared from blame but master Hong Lian feared that the Tang disciples would trouble her so asked us to protect her."

Yu Peiyu knew that the incident was with Silver Blossom breaking into the Tang Manor for her own selfish reasons again, he sighed in his heart when he thought about Silver

Blossom.

Thinking about her made him realise about Zhu Lei'Er, what was he going to do about her? In these months he had grown very fond of her and actually without knowing it himself he loved her too.

His heart ached and he did not know how to explain this to Lin Daiyu, he was feeling very confused and frustrated. He blamed himself for this awfully awkward situation.

He felt that he must tell Lin Daiyu what was going and started to say: "Daiyu, I....I....There is something very important I have to discuss with you....I don't....."

Lin Daiyu smiled sweetly: "It is about Miss Zhu isn't?"

Yu Peiyu sighed and looked embarrassed.

Lin Daiyu said softly: "I have heard what happened between you and her.....She is a sad girl too and I envy her that she stood by your side these months supporting you. And I see it in your eyes to that you have feelings for her as well. Miss Zhu, sister Jin and I have deep feelings for you and cannot bear to be separated from you again, just to let you know that I am not a jealous shrew and I will learn to love Miss Zhu just as I have become sisters with Yan'Er."

Yu Peiyu blushed and said softly: "I....I feel so ashamed.....I don't know what to say, but thank you for understanding."

Lin Daiyu smiled in a naughty way now: "In fact I am also aware of your other female friends, like Miss Tang Lin and sisters Silver Blossom and Iron Blossom....."

Yu Peiyu was even more embarrassed now and quickly said: "I.....there is nothing between me and Miss

Tang....Honest!.....I have to explain that to the Tang disciples.....And Iron Blossom is Madame Yang now....I....."

Lin Daiyu interrupted him with a smile: "I am only joking."

She added with a sigh: "Did you know that Miss Tang has become a Buddhist nun now?"

Yu Peiyu exclaimed with surprise: "What?"

Lin Daiyu sighed: "I heard that after you disappeared from the Tang manor she became scorned, mocked by her family. One night she sneaked out of the Tang Manor and wanted to

commit suicide, she did not want to die on the Tang premises because she felt she was no longer a Tang member. Fortunately she was saved by Zhixin Shi-Tai, the leader of the E Mei School, Miss Tang begged Zhixin Shi-Tai to accept her as disciple. Seeing she was adamant Zhixin Shi-Tai agreed. Before the people from the 13 schools came here there was a gathering held by abbot Tianyun of Shaolin to decide what to do."

Yu Peiyu frowned and listened attentively.

Lin Daiyu continued:"The 13 schools were divided, one group wanted to stay out of this affair and another group wanted to capture you. The people from Kunlun and Diancang wanted to capture you because they thought you were responsible for the deaths of their leaders."

Yu Peiyu was sad when he thought how his teacher, reverend Tiangang, died horribly at the hands of the evil plans of Ji Kuqing, Ji Beiqing and Yu Duhe.

Lin Daiyu knew that he was saddened about the lost of his teacher and held his hand tightly as a sign of support.

She added:"The leader of the Kunlun School, reverend Shigang and master Mei Qinghua of Diancang wanted you to pay for the deaths of reverend Tiangang and Xie Tianbi.

Reverend Shigang is the younger martial arts brother of your teacher and Mei Qinghua is the martial arts uncle of Xie Tianbi. Master Hong Lian tried his best to convince them to wait till this matter was thoroughly investigated, however the Tang Clan also wanted to hunt you down for the death of Tang Wushuang."

Yu Peiyu sighed deeply when he heard this and said sadly:"You really can't blame them, I too would probably react the same if I was in their position."

Lin Daiyu sighed too but was happy that Yu Peiyu was such a considerate man.

She said:"The leaders of the 13 schools were all debating frantically, Zhixin Shi-Tai was very supportive of the idea of master Hong Lian. I suspect that Miss Tang had something to do with that. Unfortunately most of the leaders were

indecisive like reverend Chuchen of Wudang and abbot Tianyun of Shaolin, however during this debate a Shaolin disciple and a Wudang disciple walked up to their respective leaders and whispered something in their ears. After that abbot Tianyun and reverend Chuchen took leave and when they returned two hours later they said that they will not be part of any punitive expedition."

Yu Peiyu was most surprised and asked:"Why would these two seniors suddenly be so resolute?"

Lin Daiyu shook her head and said:"I do not know either, but hearing that the leaders of the two biggest martial arts schools were not obeying the chancellor anymore the rest of the indecisive people also refuse to follow Yu Duhe. Only Diancang, Kunlun and the Tang Clan were adamant in their decision to capture you. Fortunately master Nu arrived and he angrily scolded and cursed reverend Shigang, Mei Qinghua and others and told them to keep their noses out of this or else."

Yu Peiyu smiled when he heard that and Lin Daiyu also giggled when she remembered how master Nu lectured those people.

Lin Daiyu added with a smile:"That way all the leaders agreed not to follow the commands of Yu Duhe anymore, as for the accomplices of Yu Duhe were all captured and were to be questioned later on. They are now being held captive by disciples of the Beggars Association, elder Mei Simang is left in charge to guard them."

Yu Peiyu got up and sighed deeply, all his questions were answered.

He looked over and saw Jin Yanzi and Zhu Lei'Er talking with each other, Lin Daiyu said:"Let us go over there."

When he walked over Zhu Lei'Er blushed and did not know what to say, she just stroked the cat and diverted her eyes from him. Jin Yanzi must have told her about how Lin Daiyu has no objections to her and understanding her.

Jin Yanzi laughed at Yu Peiyu:"Don't forget about me!

Remember, you said it yourself in that cave that you liked

me too, I am sticking to you like glue."

Suddenly a voice called:"Young master Yu!.....Young master Yu....."

It was Dongguo Gao who was calling him, Lin Daiyu said:"Go ahead and I will talk to Miss Zhu here."

Yu Peiyu was touched by her gesture and said:"Thank you."

He walked over there and to his surprise he saw Hai Dongqing, Yang Zijiang and Iron Blossom standing next to each other.

Yu Peiyu was very surprised and asked:"Brother Yang, are you alright?"

Yang Zijiang laughed:"A few ghosts cannot harm me, even if I cannot defeat I can still outrun them. I don't want to die yet, I don't have children yet."

Iron Blossom blushed when she heard that.

Yang Zijiang said seriously:"Having children is perfectly normal why be embarrassed?"

Yu Peiyu said:"Brother Hai and Yang, your teacher Madame Dark Jade is....."

Hai Dongqing sighed deeply:"Yes, we know. Mr. Dongguo has informed us.....although she was (sigh*). She did raise us and taught us martial arts and if you don't mind we would like to bury her body properly."

After saying that he had tears in his eyes, even Yang Zijiang looked sad. No matter how evil Ji Beiqing was, she was their teacher and parent.

Yu Peiyu said:"Of course, but what will the two of you be doing?"

Yang Zijiang said:"Having children of course! By the way elder brother Hai and I have explained that the death of Tang Wushuang is not related to you, Miss Tang Qi also spoke on your behalf. She said that she and her sister knew that this Tang Wushuang was an imposter and that is why she and Miss Tang Lin killed him, but because she wanted to investigate who was behind this plot she had to frame someone else. Furthermore masters Feng, Dongguo also said you could not be involved in this. The Tang disciples felt

ashamed, serves them right."

Yu Peiyu thought that Tang Qi kept the secret that her father really passed away more than ten years ago hidden even at this point.

Hai Dongqing said:"I have a lot of time now, I think I would like to roam about and enjoy life."

Yu Peiyu smiled:"I hope we will always remain good friends."

Both Yang Zijiang and Hai Dongqing smiled sincerely:"Always!"

Yang Zijiang immediately said with a naughty smile:"Well, I have to go soon. I have to meet my father-in-law yet."

Iron Blossom pouted and said:"You are really.....(sigh*)."

Both Yu Peiyu and Hai Dongqing laughed.

Mr. Dongguo, Feng San, Dongguo Gao were talking to abbot Tianyun and reverend Chuchen, Mr. Dongguo waved his hand:"Little boy, come here."

Yu Peiyu walked over to them.

Abbot Tianyun said:"Benefactor Yu, thank you for revealing the secrets of the Yama book of debts. This way Shaolin has finally found a traitor we have been looking for, for the past 40 years. Shaolin owes you a lot."

Yu Peiyu said humbly:"Abbot Tianyun, you are too kind."

Abbot Tianyun sighed:"That eighth Madame Fu is actually my elder martial arts brother, he was very talented in martial arts but his heart was not pure to Buddhism. After my teacher died he seized that opportunity to sneak out of Shaolin with the copy of the hundred paces divine fist manual."

Feng San said:"Abbot, even the finest orchard has a few rotten apples. You should not feel too bad about it."

Abbot Tianyun sighed:"Nevertheless he used Shaolin skills to kill numerous heroes in Wulin."

Yu Peiyu was curious and asked:"May I ask, what....."

Reverend Chuchen interrupted him with a smile:"I know what you want to ask, young master Yu. You are wondering what made us change our mind."

Yu Peiyu said respectfully:"Indeed, reverend."

Mr. Dongguo stroked his long beard and laughed:"Because of an old friend of mine.....You know him too, Peiyu."

Yu Peiyu looked confused.

Dongguo Gao smiled:"Although you met him you have never seen him."

Yu Peiyu suddenly remembered who it was and said:"The parrot."

Mr. Dongguo laughed:"Yes, that old fool has moved to some valley and called it [Echo Valley]. It has been at least 20 years ago since I last saw him."

Yu Peiyu said:"I would really like to thank that old sir for aiding me."

Mr. Dongguo said:"That old fool likes to travel around and nobody knows where this Echo Valley is. If he wants to meet you he will look for you. He is a strange old fool but his heart is at the right place."

Reverend Chuchen said:"Many years ago Shaolin and Wudang faced a rather difficult situation and it was this old sir who aided us in our times of need. So when we heard that he requested us not to interfere here, abbot Tianyun and I obliged."

At this point Zhixin Shi-Tai walked over and greeted all the others before turning to Yu Peiyu:"Amitabha. Benefactor Yu my disciple Konghuan wishes you well and hopes you will bring righteousness and justice in Wulin. Konghuan used to be Tang Lin. Amitabha, I take my leave now. I too wish all of you well and hope to see you again soon."

She made a Buddhist greeting again to Yu Peiyu and the others.

Yu Peiyu now saw Zhixin Shi-Tai for the first time. He noticed that she was a Buddhist nun about 60 years old, she looked very tranquil and serene, she really looked like a very respected Wulin senior. Furthermore he had long heard of her good name in the realm.

Yu Peiyu did not know what to think when he heard that Tang Lin became a Buddhist nun.

Reverend Chuchen said:"Shi-Tai, would you mind waiting for

a moment. Let us also discuss who is going to be the new chancellor now all of us are here anyway."

Zhixin Shi-Tai said calmly:"Of course, reverend Chuchen."

Hong Lianhua now walked up to Yu Peiyu and smiled:"Brother Yu, it has been a long time."

Yu Peiyu felt like it was another lifetime the last time he spoke to Hong Lianhua.

Hong Lianhua patted him on his shoulder and said:"I always believed you could face the problems ahead of you. You are truly one amazing man!"

Yu Peiyu had tears in his eyes of joy:"Brother Hong Lian, I.....if it wasn't for you I would not know how I could be here in the first place."

Hong Lianhua said:"The nightmare is finally over, but a new responsibility rests in your hand."

At this point all the important dignitaries of Wulin gathered around, Lin Daiyu, Zhu Lei'Er and Jin Yanzi stood next to Yu Peiyu as a sign of support.

Abbot Tianyun said:"Master Hong Lian is right, I too feel that benefactor Yu should lead Wulin now."

Mei Qinghua of Diancang suddenly said coldly:"Well, perhaps all the heroes of Wulin accept young master Yu but.....Diancang is not too keen on that idea. Young master Yu, how do you explain the death of master Xie Tianbi? Diancang demands an explanation from you now!"

Yang Zijiang asked Hai Dongqing:"Elder brother Hai, since when did young master Yu become a Diancang disciple?"

Hai Dongqing replied:"To my knowledge young master Yu has no ties with the Diancang school?"

Yang Zijiang said:"I see.....Mr. Mei, why should young master Yu help you investigate the murderer of your leader? Did young master Yu become a government official?"

Mei Qinghua angrily said:"Yang Zijiang and Hai Dongqing, you are both the pupils of Ji Beiqing! Who knows if you're not implicated in their devious plans? Diancang is not afraid of heretic fiends like you."

Yang Zijiang said:"We shall see how bold Diancang is....."

Yu Peiyu knew that Mei Qinghua is no match for Yang Zijiang and quickly intervened: "Master Mei, I really am not responsible for the death of master Xie. I can swear to that." Hong Lianhua said: "Brother Xie was not killed by young master Yu."

Reverend Shigang said loudly: "How about my martial arts brother? Yu Peiyu, you ARE a Kunlun disciple! Tell me what happened!"

Reverend Shigang emphasized the fact that he could order Yu Peiyu, because not only was he the martial arts uncle of Yu Peiyu but he was also the leader of Kunlun now.

At this point a clear voice said: "Stop arguing!"

The voice sounded clear, melodic but cold. The speaker was a young girl, Yu Peiyu recognized her. She was his cousin Ji Lingyan, following her were two men.

Suddenly Mei Qinghua said with surprise and shock: "Tianbi, is that you?"

One of those men was Xie Tianbi, he looked very skinny, pale and sickly but when he saw Mei Qinghua he looked happy and said: "Uncle Mei, it is me. Young master Yu killed the imposter of me.....we should not wrongfully accuse him." Yu Peiyu noticed that he was not mad anymore and looked quite sound of mind.

Mei Qinghua looked confused now and did not know what to believe.

Ji Lingyan said coldly: "I know that Xie Tianbi alone is not enough to convince you, there is another person who can testify that Yu Peiyu is innocent."

She pointed at the other man, everyone now saw that the man was Lin Shoujuan. Or at least the fake Lin Shoujuan, Lin Daiyu looked very angry and sad now.

Ji Lingyan said coldly: "I intercepted this fellow when he was trying to leave the province. Tell everyone who you really are and reveal to them what happened to Taoist priest Tiangang! If you're smart I suggest that you will tell the truth."

Lin Shoujuan said resolutely: "My real name is Xiahou Guxing."

Suddenly some people exclaimed with surprise:"The thousand serpent sword!" He looked a bit flustered at Ji Lingyan, it seems that this Xiahou Guxing had experienced the lethal methods of this cold young woman.

The thousand serpent sword Xiahou Guxing was a heretic expert who roamed the north and was said be one of the few friends elusive cloud Yu Duhe had. Occasionally they would plunder and kill together, raid armed guard escorts. Because of his good martial arts he could escape the pursuit of his enemies, but about ten years ago nothing was heard of him again. Most people assumed he had died, but now they knew he must have been enlisted by Ji Beiqing, Ji Kuqing and Yu Duhe.

Xiahou Guxing said loudly:"Yes, I am the thousand serpent sword. There is no point in lying about anything now, everything is lost now. Brother Duhe ordered the fake Xie Tianbi to ambush priest Tiangang of Kunlun and we think he succeeded in that ambush after that the imposter himself was gone too. We assumed he was killed by Yu Peiyu and Hong Lianhua. Our plan to take over Wulin has failed, I have nothing to say now. Kill me if you please, I don't mind I have lived long enough."

He looked at Lin Daiyu and laughed coldly:"To tell you the truth I killed your father, I lead the group to slaughter your family!"

Lin Daiyu screamed:"You fiend!" She drew her sword and pierced through his heart.

Everyone cheered:"Good, Miss Lin!"

She started to sob, she too has finally avenged her father. Yu Peiyu gently took her hand, both Jin Yanzi and Zhu Lei'Er both said:"Don't be sad, sister Daiyu."

Mei Qinghua and reverend Shigang walked up and bowed to Yu Peiyu.

Mei Qinghua said:"Please forgive this old fool for being ignorant and rude."

Xie Tianbi added:"Dianchang has no objections to young master Yu being the new chancellor of Wulin."

Yu Peiyu said politely:" Old master Mei, don't worry about it. And thank you master Xie but I fear that I do not have the abilities to be chancellor."

Reverend Shigang said:"Young master Yu, please forgive this Taoist for being rude too. But I feel that you should become the chancellor of Wulin too, speaking as your martial arts uncle I feel that are very fit to lead the realm to a new era. You would not only restore glory to your family but also your late teacher, brother Tiangang would also be very happy."

Yu Peiyu said respectfully:"Uncle Shigang, I....."

Xu Shuzhen of Huashan said gracefully:"I agree with reverend Shigang."

Abbot Tianyun said:"Both reverend Chuchen and I support the idea of benefactor Yu becoming the new chancellor."

Yu Peiyu stuttered:"But....but....there are other people more suitable than I.....Mr. Dongguo and....."

Mr. Dongguo interrupted:"Don't give me that position I don't have the patience nor the time to govern this realm.....little child don't dump your problems on me."

Yu Peiyu looked at Feng San and Dongguo Gao.

Feng San said:"Younger brother, I am old besides I wanted to roam the seas for a long time. Now I finally have that time."

Dongguo Gao said:"Young master Yu, you will do fine. I am old and have no intentions of being dragged into the affairs of the realm anymore."

Yu Peiyu said:"Very well, since every senior has such a high regard of me I will accept this position only till I have found a better person to replace me. And I have one condition.....I want brother Hong Lian to be my counsellor."

Everyone was supportive of this idea, Hong Lianhua was a sharp and intelligent person with a good character. He would surely be able to assist Yu Peiyu in his duties.

Schools like Kongtong and Hainan did not object, first of all with the martial arts of Jue Qinzi and Yu Xuan they had no chance of becoming chancellor. Furthermore Yu Xuan knew that Yu Peiyu was an intelligent and very powerful martial artist, he truly respected him and was supportive of that

idea.

Hence a new chancellor of Wulin was nominated, Yu Peiyu.

Autumn came and Autumn went, Winter came and Winter left. Time passes quick in a time of change.

A lot happened in the realm of Yu Peiyu became chancellor, first all the hypocrites, rogues in the book of debts were punished and dealt with accordingly. For example eighth squire Fu and eighth Madame Fu were taken back to Shaolin Monastery and their martial arts were nullified and were locked up in a cave on Mount Shaoshi.

Yu Peiyu also pleaded on behalf of Zhong Jing and Guo Pianxian to Madame Hai Tang, Hong Lianhua and Xu Shuzhen. It seems that Ji Lingyan released them after she escaped from the stone hall. Hong Lianhua, Xu Shuzhen and Madame Hai Tang agreed that they will leave Guo Pianxian and Zhong Jing alone but if they did not repent and continued to create problems in Wulin, they will then not escape their punishment. Yu Peiyu agreed to these terms. As for Ji Lingyan, after her attempt to conquer Wulin failed she did not have the ambitions anymore to take over the realm. She took care of her mentally handicapped sister and her sickly mother, they left Murder Manor and found a desolate place to live. It seems that when Ji Zanghua hear that his father and mother, Ji Kuqing and Ji Beiqing, died he went totally mad and ran into the ancestral grave of their family and set fire to it, he too was killed in that fire.

As for Mr. Dongguo he present a sack full of small treasures, taken from the Fu estate, and dumped it in front of Yu Peiyu's home with a letter that it was a wedding gift. He was going to find himself a new place to cultivate, the old spot was now no longer mysterious anymore.

Feng San bought himself a ship and set sail for adventure, he had no worries anymore Zhu Lei'Er was safe and happy. He was finally able to do what he wanted many years ago. Hai Dongqing joined him in this quest for adventure.

Dongguo Gao moved to a house next to Ji Lingyang, he became her teacher and started to teach her martial arts.

She was much happier now and sometimes would joke that at least she won in a certain way. Her cousin was the chancellor of Wulin, so that was a small compensation.

The Heavenly Silkworm Sect could co-exist with the 13 schools with no problems at all. Yang Zijiang and Iron Blossom sort of retreated from Wulin, occasionally one would hear about a strange man with a funny personality doing chivalrous deeds but never leaving behind a name. Only a beautiful young woman would always be at his side, smiling or shaking her head.

After one year, the house where Yu Peiyu lived in was empty. The flag which represented the chancellor was put in a box on the table, both reverend Chuchen and abbot Tianyun received a letter of Yu Peiyu.

In those letters he recommended that Hong Lianhua was a better person to be chancellor, Hong Lianhua also received a letter from his good friend saying that he does not have the abilities to lead the realm. He would much rather spend time with his wives.

So Hong Lianhua became the new chancellor and Xie Tianbi became the counsellor, both were intelligent young men with a strong sense of righteousness and justice. With them as the head of the realm, Wulin was safe.

Several years later, the realm of martial arts was peaceful. The people living in the city of Kunming would often see a very handsome young man with three beautiful young ladies strolling and smiling along Dianchi Lake.

One man having three beautiful wives is such a bliss, not many people have such luck of finding even one such a wonderful partner. But do people realise that how much tears, sweat and blood had flowed before realising this beautiful dream.

But something even more wonderful is that each wife was holding a cute baby and were joking and looked very happy and idyllic.

Of course they were Yu Peiyu, Lin Daiyu, Jin Yanzi and Zhu Lei' Er.

Dramatis Personae

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Besides being a prolific writer, Gu Long was also known for his ability to populate his works with many colourful characters. Athena provides us with a list of the key personalities in The Sword and the Exquisiteness.

Ed: With the exception of YU PEIYU, which heads the list, all characters are listed in alphabetical order.

YU PEIYU: The hero of this novel, he is a handsome young man. He is in search of the mastermind who is responsible for the death of his father, Yu Fanghe. His martial arts are very good, like his father he belongs to the Xiantian Wuji (Congenital no extreme) School. He has a long and difficult quest ahead of him.

ABBOT TIANYUN: He is the leader of the Shaolin School. For a few times in a row he became the chancellor of Wulin. However he had no desire to lead Wulin again. He is an enlightened Buddhist monk with excellent martial arts. Also he's highly respected by everyone in Wulin.

BAIHE (White crane): He is the head pupil of reverend Tiangang. He is leading his fellow martial arts brothers to pursue Yu Peiyu. The Kunlun disciples believe that Yu Peiyu is responsible for the death of reverend Tiangang. They want Yu Peiyu to be executed.

DONGFANG DAMING: One of the ten Great Martial Arts Masters in the world 20 years ago. He is also the lord and master of the Sun and Moon Isle and the Nocturne City. He lead a so-called expedition to "rescue" his son, Dongfang Meiyu, from Zhu Mei. His weapon a pair of Sun and Moon Wheels.

DONGFANG MEIYU: The son of the Dongfang Daming, was said to be a very handsome young man. He was also the husband of Zhu Mei, who was twice his age, after he grew weary of her he decided to betray her. He is cold-blooded monster, who wanted Zhu Mei dead because he feared her.

DONGGUO, MR: The number one martial arts expert of this time, he is an elusive Wulin senior. Yu Peiyu met him two times and in those two encounters he helped Yu Peiyu out; giving him courage and giving him pointers in martial arts. He is also the older brother of old man Gao/Dongguo Gao.

DONGGUO GAO (old man Gao): Also known as the *thousand mile eagle*. He has reached the level of perfection in the art of levitation, furthermore he possesses great medical skills. He managed to combine the art of disguise with his medical skills, hence the new face of Yu Peiyu.

EIGHTH SQUIRE FU: a rich old man with incredible martial arts, he forces people to give him presents during his birthday if not he will kill those who are reluctant or have given him not so great gifts. Everyone fears him.

EIGHTH MADAME FU: the wife of eighth squire Fu, it is said that she is much nicer than her husband.

(FAKES) WANG YULUO, XIMEN FENG, LIN SHOUJUAN, SHEN YINQIANG, DRAGONKING OF TAIHU: These WERE famous martial arts experts in the realm but all of them were killed and replaced by imposters. Except for a few people in the realms nobody knows that the present group are imposters. They are lackeys of the evil mastermind.

FENG SAN: A famous hero with very high martial arts, he even surpasses some of the Ten Martial Arts Masters. Because he has encountered a very unhappy incident in his own life, he has grown weary of men. However he did manage to overhear the plans of Dongfang Daming and came to the help of Zhu Mei. Unfortunately he couldn't save her and he himself was poisoned by granny Hu's venom. He promised Zhu Mei, he would take good care of Zhu Lei' Er.

FOUR BEASTS, THE: rogues who rob, steal, kill and rape.
Hated and feared by many people.

THE BLACK PANTHER QIN BIAO: he is the leader of the four
beasts. An infamous robber his face is filled with scars.

THE RED TIGER ZHAO GANG: he is big, fat man who is an
utter boar.

GREYWOLF: he is very skinny and looks very indifferent but
is quite lethal.

THE WHITE SNAKE LORD: The most handsome one in the
group, but he's very despicable and eerie.

GRANNY HU: There were two of these old grannies, who
looked exactly the same. Reason: They were twins. One
granny Hu died several years ago at the hands of Dongfang
Daming. Both granny Hus were very vicious, cunning and
leading experts in usage of poison. Granny Hu was also one
of the Ten Martial Arts Masters of this time, because nobody
knew they were twins they were extra mysterious and
feared. These two sisters are responsible for Feng San's
present condition.

GUO PIANXIAN: Elder of the Beggars Association. He is a
very sly man and has learnt hypnotism as well as several
different styles of martial arts. The old leader of the Beggars
Association couldn't prove his crimes so he banned him.
Now Guo Pianxian has returned and is up to no good.

HAI DONGQING: A mysterious young handsome man with
amazing martial arts. He looks very cold and talks very
arrogantly but his heart is at the right place. He also has a
soft spot for Zhu Lei'Er, whether Zhu Lei'Er knows that or
appreciates that is another thing.

HONG LIANHUA: The young leader of the Beggars
Association, he is a good friend of Yu Peiyu and is helping
him to uncover the truth of the evil mastermind. He is a very
intelligent man with very good martial arts. He is secretly in
love with Lin Daiyu.

LI PEILING: She is the daughter-in-law of Tang Wushuang and she is a friendly woman who takes good care of her sisters-in-law.

LIN DAIYU: The fiancée of Yu Peiyu, she is a very strong and intelligent girl. And is helping Yu Peiyu secretly. She is also the daughter of the hero Lin Shoujuan aka The Flowered Chestnut Sword. She is also proclaimed to be the most beautiful woman of Wulin at the time.

JI BEIQING: Also better known as *Madame Dark Jade*, she is one of the top martial arts experts in the realm. The only person who can defeat her is Mr. Dongguo. She is the teacher of Hai Dongqing and Yang Zijiang. She is the younger sister and wife of her brother Ji Kuqing. Somehow she is related to the plot to rule Wulin. She has learnt many skills and has learnt the art of disguise and medical skills from Persians. She has managed to combine both and is probably responsible for creating all those imposters.

JIN YANZI (Golden Swallow): A beautiful young girl who is in love with Yu Peiyu. She is famous heroine in Wulin. She is a straightforward girl when she's mad with someone she will scold that person. If she is in love with someone she will say it directly to him.

JUE QINGZI: The leader of Kongtong school, he is a Taoist priest but lacks the temper and grandeur a true Taoist priest should have. He is quite petty but because of his martial arts no one would like to offend him. Not a pleasant character but also not too intelligent.

LEI FENG: He is the warden of the Thunderbolt Clan. He is one of the most richest man in the world, but his martial arts are just mediocre. The Thunderbolt clan is not only famous in Wulin for the usage of gunpowder and secretive weapons. But the clan also holds the monopoly of the oil, lamps, flints and such. Over a few generations they acquired lots and lots of money.

MADAME HAITANG: The leader of the Baihua (100 flowers) Association. A rather mysterious woman but ever so enchanting. Although no one knows how good her martial arts is but nobody would dream of offending her. She loves to hear compliments about her beauty and is very cunning.

MADAME JI: She is lady of the manor and wife of Ji Zanghua. She is very pretty. She does not love her husband in fact she hates him. She is waiting for her lover to return. And because her lover suddenly left many years ago without a word, she has gone a bit insane.

MASTER NU (anger): One of the Ten Martial Arts Masters of this time. His martial arts are incredibly high and is very much feared and respected by both orthodox and onorthodox martial artists. But the most striking about him is his unbelievable hot temper. He scolds almost everyone for the most little incidents. But he is a good man, just a extremely bad-tempered Taoist priest.

MEI SIMANG: an elder of the Beggars Association. He is an expert in controlling and using snakes. He is the confidant of Hong Lianhua and is very loyal to Hong Lianhua and the Beggars Association.

JI KUQING: The father of Ji Zanghua. He is a remarkably smart and crafty. Everyone thought he went to repent for his deeds when he reached 50 years old. However Yu Peiyu found out that there was more to it than meets the eye. Whether he is alive or dead he is full of surprises.

JI LINGFENG: She is the eldest daughter of Ji Zanghua and Madame Ji. Although whether she really is the daughter of Ji Zanghua is questionable. She despises Ji Zanghua and hates her mother. She is like her mother very pretty but she is really mysterious and cold. Her motives are also everything but clear.

JI LINGYAN: She is the twin sister of Ji Lingfeng. She is mentally handicapped and thinks she is a bird and talks to

birds all the time. She is the most innocent member of the entire Ji family.

JI ZANGHUA: He is the lord of Murder Manor. He is a mad midget who is obsessed with death. Everyone who enters his manor can be killed by him or betrayed by him. He also has a very strange relationship with his wife and daughters.

OLD MAN GAO: He is a mysterious old hero who went undercover in Murder Manor to investigate Ji Kuqing. He has successfully managed to combine the art of disguise with medical science. He has successfully altered Yu Peiyu's face.

PARROT: Another mysterious expert, he comes from the Echo Valley. He imitates the voices of others perfectly and plays the nasty mindgame of repeating every word his victim says. His art of levitation is unmatched in the world. He has even scared away Tian Chixing. But no one has ever seen his true appearances.

REVEREND CHUCHEN: The leader of Wudang School. He is the brother of Xu Shuzhen (leader of Huashan). He's highly respected in Wulin and has superior martial arts.

REVEREND TIANGANG: The leader of Kunlun School. He is an enlightened Taoist priest with superior martial arts. He is also very sharp and wise. He is also the teacher of Yu Peiyu, however he too dies at the hand of the evil mastermind.

SANG ERLANG: He is the head disciple of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. Because he has been punished for trying to molest Silver Blossom and was fed to the silkworms. However he was not killed, unfortunately he has become very very ugly and he has become quite mad. He has also secret connections with Yu Fanghe and is trying to become the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect.

SANG MUKONG: He is the hierarch of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. He is the father of Golden Blossom, Silver Blossom and Iron Blossom, he has great martial arts and has mastered the art of disguise perfectly. He is also a very intelligent man

albeit he can be very cruel and cold-hearted even to his own daughters.

SHIYUN: He is the pupil of Master Nu, unlike his teacher he has great patience. He is very polite and elegant. Yu Peiyu even mistook him for a girl when he met him for the first time. Although he may look girlish he is an extremely good martial arts expert.

TANG WUSHUANG: His nickname is the *Unparalleled Old Man*. He is the leader of the famous Tang clan of Sichuan province. The Tang clan has been famous and respected for their poisonous secretive weaponry for hundreds of years. It is said that their skill in the secretive weaponry is also unmatched in the realm. Tang Wushuang is also a renowned for being the best secretive weapon expert of the realm. He is also the leading figure of the Wulin in the Sichuan province.

TANG LIN: She is the youngest daughter of Tang Wushuang, she is very elegant and innocent. But she is suffering from lovesickness.

TANG QI: She is the daughter of Tang Wushuang. For the past few years she has taken over the duties as the leader of the Tang clan from her old father. People in Wulin are saying that she brings bad luck because her three fiancées died before they actually got married to her. In a anger she has sworn never to get married in her life.

TANG SHOUFANG: he is the fourth disciple of Tang Wushuang, he is a very vigilant man. He takes his duties and responsibilities very serious and expects others to do the same.

TANG SHOUQING: he is the seventh disciple of Tang Wushuang, he is a friendly man who is amiable. But one should not underestimate him. He too is an good martial artist and is said to be the one of the top martial arts experts of the Tang Clan. His nickname is the Thousand Armed Arhat.

TANG YUE: He is the second son of Tang Wushuang, he is madly in love with Golden Blossom. Because Tang Wushuang and Sang Mukong disapproved of this relationship, Tang Yue was forced to take unorthodox methods to be together with Golden Blossom.

THREE MAGNIFICENT FLOWER LADIES, THE:

GOLDEN BLOSSOM: She is the eldest sister of the three ladies. She is in love with a son of Tang Wushuang. Unfortunately Tang Wushuang forbade his son to see her, so she and her two other sister try to force Tang Wushuang to acknowledge her. She is very beautiful and intelligent. She is also the eldest daughter of the leader of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect.

SILVER BLOSSOM: She is the second daughter of the leader of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. She looks very sexy and seductive. But she is also the most vicious sister of the three. She has lots of lovers and often uses her beauty to play them out against each other. She fell in love with Yu Peiyu but Yu Peiyu doesn't like her so she hates Yu Peiyu very much.

IRON BLOSSOM: She is the third daughter of the leader of the Heavenly Silkworm Sect. She looks very innocent and sweet but she can be quite ruthless. She also falls in love with Yu Peiyu and Golden Blossom also hopes Yu Peiyu will take her little sister as his wife. Unfortunately Yu Peiyu doesn't love her. But unlike her second sister she won't hate him for it and she secretly hopes that one day Yu Peiyu will come and take her as his wife.

TIAN CHIXING: A mysterious fat martial arts expert, who can even scare away someone like granny Hu. He loves to eat and is said to have eaten his way to invincibility. His martial arts are very very high and he doesn't like to walk and always travels via carriage. Furthermore he is carried around on a huge bed.

TIAN JIYUN: He is the only son of the Divine Dragon Swordsman. He is very arrogant but he learnt many skills from his father. Also a younger generation martial artist who should be treated with caution.

XIANGXIANG: A courtesan of the Apricot Pavillion, she is quite a seductress. She also knows martial arts and is also working for Ji Lingfeng because she addicted to those pills of happiness.

XIE TIANBI: he is the young leader of the Diancang school. He is also a good friend of Hong Lianhua. But somehow he has been replaced by an imposter and his whereabouts are currently unknown.

XIE TIANBI (REAL): The leader of the Diancang School who was saved by Ji Lingfeng. He is also a victim of the evil mastermind.

XU RUOYU: The husband of granny Hu, he married her because of her martial arts and other abilities. He never loved her in fact he detested her and wished her dead for many years now. He used to be the young master of the Myriad Wood Manor and his nickname was the Flower Swordsman. Now he is working for Ji Lingfeng and is addicted to her pills of happiness.

XU SHUZHEN: aka The Lotus Fairy. She is the younger sister of Reverend Chuchen and she is the present leader of Huashan School. Her art of levitation is praised throughout the realm. She is also a Taoist priestess. She is one of the most famous leaders of the Huashan School in the Gu Long universe. Even in the Chu Liuxiang novels her name was mentioned.

YANG JUNBI: He is Diancang disciple. He is rather rude and rash. And he is very arrogant for the fact that he is a Diancang disciple.

YANG ZIJIAN: A mysterious young man who is working for or with Yu Fanghe. It appears that he has very high martial arts and is very knowledgeable about Wulin affairs. He looks

very skinny but quite handsome, he can really annoy people with his carefree, indifferent attitude. But at least he is honest about his bad character traits.

YI KUN: also known as the *flying hunchback of the north*, he is one of the ten great martial arts masters of this time along with master Nu, granny Hu etc.

YOUNG MASTER OF THE DIVINE SABRE, THE: He is in love with Jin Yanzi and is quite obnoxious. Also he follows her around and is unaware of the fact that she can't stand him.

YU DUHE: The elusive cloud, he is the younger brother of (the real) Yu Fanghe. He has been disowned by his own family for his wicked ways and has conspired to kill his own brother. He is also the one who is impersonating his late brother.

YU FANGHE: The father of Yu Peiyu, he is famous for his benevolence and gentleness. He is also the leader of Xiantian Wuji School. Unfortunately he was murdered and replaced.

YU FANGHE (FAKE): He is the replacement of the real Yu Fanghe and has successfully become the new chancellor of Wulin. He is in cahoots with the evil mastermind.

YU XUAN: The leader of the Hainan School, he loves to drink. And is quite fat but his swordsmanship and martial arts are said to be unmatched in the southern regions of China.

ZHONG JING: She is a student of Xu Shuzhen. She is quite young but knows a lot of Wulin history.

ZHU LEI'ER: The daughter of Zhu Mei and Dongfang Meiyu, although she still an adolescent girl she has acquired many skills from her mother. A great user of poison and her mesmerizing skills are not be looked down upon. Although she is young she is at this point the most enchanting and beautiful girl in the story. She takes care of her wounded third uncle.

ZHU MEI: The Keeper of the Palace of Enchantment, she was proclaimed to be the most beautiful woman in Wulin 30, 40 years ago. Also known to be a ruthless and dangerous woman. But when she fell in love with Dongfang Meiyu she turned over a new leaf. However Dongfang Meiyu betrayed her after she lost her appearances.